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OTTERBOURNE;

A STORY OF THE ENGLISH MARCHES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DERWENTWATER."

The Englyshmenne and the Skottes are good men of warre, for when they mete there is a hard fyght without sparynge.

LORD BERNER'S FROISSART.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
(LATE COLBURN AND BENTLEY).

1832.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

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OTTERBOURNE.

CHAPTER I.

He would maintain it a base ill used fashion,
To bind a merchant to the sullen habit
Of precise black.

MARSTON.

THE mansion of Master Miles Farneley stood in what was then the principal street of the town, though now existing only as a range of dingy impending tenements, unused except for counting and warehouses. It was, and is still, known by the name of the Side; from its flanking the course of an insignificant, and not very savoury brook, that fell, a little onwards, into the river. The moderns, in their simplicity, have a custom of raising the walls of their

buildings perpendicularly; in which practice they have departed from the rules of domestic architecture observed by their fathers, founded, no doubt on reasons of sapience. If ever the mutations of taste should bring about a return to the old system, the houses in the Side will, unless they be previously destroyed by the “unhallowed hand of innovation,” furnish warranted models. Therein, each successive story juts beyond the one below, until the uppermost, mostly pretty lofty, overhangs in a manner that some may deem uncomfortable to behold. Whether this was contrived to create a pleasing shadow in the way beneath; or whether it embodied some venerable notion of stability, eccentric only because not understood, is left for others to determine.

The *boutiquiers* of our days are said to be not over and above satisfied with the wide airy streets now adopted, having an idea that the passer on one side of the way is thereby saved from the enticements arrayed on the other. They

opine, that the distance in the first place limits the view, and that in the second the trouble of crossing stifles the half-formed inclination a 'thwart shot may chance to raise. In this matter, our trading ancestors seem to have displayed at once their judgment and their influence. For we find all old thoroughfares of such dimension, that customers, being people of moderate activity, could stride from one shop to its opposite, without caring for a miry street or a falling shower. We may elsewhere be accused of "wronging the ancientry;" but let the above passing tribute to their thrifty wisdom stand a proof of our disposition to do them strict justice.

In the midst, then, of an irregular line of the beetling edifices before specified, and not much distinguished from the rest, was seated that of the bailiff. What with the beam-head abutments which supported, and the extending lattices which occupied each narrow story, there appeared more wood-work than masonry in its

front. This was, however, carved and decorated in such way as to import that no consequent deficiency of pretension was to be assumed. The entrance lay through a long, low-browed, and, necessarily dark, passage, which conducted to the rear of the building. When there, a flight of stone steps was discovered, leading to a door in the second story, which formed the family ingress, that for menials being in the basement. After traversing a spacious vestibule, the visitor entered into a large wainscotted apartment, occupying the whole front of the mansion ;—and wherein we intend to deposit the reader. There, on the morning following their arrival in *the* Newcastle (the article is retained in deference to the olden usage), de Coup-land, his daughter, niece, father Noel, and Mouboucher, assembled to their matin meal.

The room, notwithstanding want of height, was extremely light and cheerful, inasmuch as an entire side of it was taken up by a huge window of continuous casements. The ceiling

boasted the labours of no mean artist, in a profusion of mouldings and tracery, which its neighbourhood to the eye rendered specially availing. But what at this precise juncture most gratified that organ, was the vision of a well-plenished board ; wherever the worthy Miles and his dame held the dominion, of all others, most graciously admitted. Cold sirloin, pickled salmon, (from the Tyne,) pasties, marchpane, and wastel bread, were marshalled on a field of snowy napery in all substantial dignity of an ancient breakfast. Nor was the juicy rump-steak, hot from the brander, omitted in the goodly display of solids : whilst clary, hippocras, and homely toast and ale, diffused abundantly their liquid comforts.

Now, seeing that in these days no aqueous beverage like tea, coffee or chocolate was prepared for the ladies, a prurient mind may be apt to speculate on the possible effects of the more potent substitutes. We condemn all such ill-bred dispositions. Doubtless, a gentle glow of complexion, and an agreeable vivacity of man-

ner might, at such seasons, be observable amongst our youthful great grand-dames, but which of their admirers would not attribute the same to his own engaging presence and well-conceived pleasantries?

Dame Dinah Farneley, the respectable wife of the bailiff, was a fine old woman. Her heart as guileless as her neat white volupere unstained. Old, in the strict sense of the word, she was not, being yet a comely matron, though of somewhat large proportions; but, as her virtues were of elderly character, that distinction is here gratuitously given to her. Shrewd and pertinent in remark, her opinions obtained attentive audience even from those who might not have had opportunity to know her uniform goodness of intention. She was homely to a degree in her manners, but withal so natural, so kindly, so unpretending, that no one ever wished her otherwise. Ladyism was the antipodes of her deportment; yet such is the effect of pure singleness of mind, when coupled with good sense, that

even amongst high-bred dames she would not have appeared vulgar. Her least commendable quality took no worse shape than is implied in a strong dash of feminine curiosity. The duty of ministering to the wishes of two maidens like Amisia and Hester was one that brought out all her amiabilities. The former, in particular, attracted her urbane regard.

“Ah, honey-burd!” she exclaimed, after having tired of luring her to refection. “I misdoubt me, that when my graceless brother-in-law haled thee from the reiving Scot, he let him steal away thy will to English fare. Son Raimond, how cam’st thou to suffer that?”

“Perchance, I was too anxious to secure to us the lady’s beauty,” answered Raimond gallantly—“in that, thou may’st well see, mother, I have fully succeeded.”

“Beautiful, indeed!” admired the dame, tenderly patting Amisia’s cheek. “Thou did’st the Scots a kindlier turn than thou had’st mind of, son.”

“ Fye, dear dame !” said the maiden, blushing—“ The cream of thy honesty should not be whipped into the giddy froth that glozing gallants mock us with, upon too weak admission. Dost think so poor a chance has spared these Scots the wrack of feud upon their land ?”

“ They had deserved it, otherwise, sweet,” replied Dinah. “ But my fancy ran on the revenge thyself had ta’en upon their hearts. They say the wild louns have a gleg eye at a brent brow.”

“ Nay, thou wilt not be ruled, I see,” returned Amisia. “ Thy memory is apt, and I dare swear, ripe in such sugared tales ; or bachelors were duller once than now-a-days.”

The well-fared dame smiled, and bridled complacently.

“ Hester,” pursued Amisia, giving a sly glance at her friend. “ Thou hast heard our rough neighbours may be moved by a maiden’s looks. Peradventure, our trips’ prevention has lost one of us a knight.”

Hester coloured slightly, and made some trivial rejoinder.

“ Ah ! dear heart ! ” ejaculated Dinah, looking kindly upon Amisia. “ I rejoice to see thee shew cheer of heart after this rude trial. Hold to it through life, if thou canst ; for, trust me, moan never mended mischief. Natheless, the Mother of Heaven send no more such black crosses may betide to strip thy cheek of the bloom that now lies on’t so richly ! ”

Whilst the charms of de Coupland’s fair daughter lie under this pointed allusion, it will not be amiss to notice the style of vesture in which they were disclosed. To Hester also the same details may, in general outline, be applied. *Les curieuses* require this satisfaction. Blame us not, grave reader, that we indulge a craving wherein thou hast no share ; but, if the thing irks, pass to other matter—thy transit shall be brief.

She appeared without wimple, or couvreckef ; her sunny tresses being very partially confined

by a light caul of gold net-work, and narrow ornamented sort of bandeau, with falling pendants: it was the fashionable coiffure of the period. A close vest of Cyprus silk, semi-circularly fronted, barely met across the bust; and retiring above and below, left undisguised her dazzling neck. Beneath she wore a kirtle of fine linen; and her waist was defined by a cincture of gold baudekin, or tissue, supporting a fanciful purse of the same material. Over these, a rich mantle of azure sendal, (a kind of silk then used) was occasionally thrown, but at present laid aside. Such was her costume. For its taste, let the century answer.

The *dulcia furta*, as ‘fluent’ Ovid would have said—into which the lovely person thus arrayed tempted the eyes of the love-sick esquire, were many indeed.—But to pursue.

“Large thanks for thy kind prayer, sweet hostess,” said Amisia, replying to Dame Farneley’s last aspiration. “To be beset in peaceful home, and put in jeopardy of liberty and

honour, is a foul blast of sorrow that, e'en when past, might warrant a sadness in remembrance. Yet the happy issue of it, for which we are debtors to thy son, hast paid us with advantage by bringing us to thy fosterage and friendship ; these, else, we might ne'er have known."

" I fear you speak but in courtly strain," said the dame, much pleased, " it sounds, though, so prettily from thy lips, that I am full fain to believe it sooth."

" Nay, indeed thou may'st," observed Hester. " At least, in so far as this: that I can vouch for it, burd Amise hath not this morning cast back one regretful thought."

There was a retaliatory meaning in the above, only intelligible to the party *at* whom it was directed.

" Ay, ay," grumbled Sir John, " all's forgotten, I dare say ; and no worlds marvel in't. You wenches make small account o' what affects not your lutings and your tirings—your masquings and your fooleries ; but 'tis no whist=

ling matter to a knight-banneret to have his hold herried and burnt in his own sight, by a route of rascaille reivers from one border, and then be bound for rescue to the scum o' the other."

"Dear father!" admonished Amisia.

"Essoin me, friends," apologized the blundering knight, "if, sitting in a company so goodly, it had slipped my mind ye own some dash o' that wild blood. Tut! what boots?—there's mettle in't. Your dalesmen are lusty spears at a need's push. My bond on't! our young esquire will prove the wightlier man-at-arms through that same smack! God's troth! I'm o' the strein myself, after a sort."

Thus the blunt old knight endeavoured to wipe away the impression of his original left-handed sally. Refinement of feeling was not a thing wherewith he was much burthened. Indeed, in an age like this, when the simple ability to read was an accomplishment confined to professed clerks, we may fairly surmise him to have been no way singular in his deficiencies. If this

were not an ineligible time to be discursive, we might have ventured a few conjectures on the probable manners of our storied kings, courtiers, and preux chevaliers. We have fine picturesque notions of them; but in sober earnest, we fear they must have been enormous Goths. Not one but would be "cut" by the "exclusives" of the present day.

"Prithee, worthy bailiff," resumed Sir John, infelicitously following up the idea that was impolitely forward in his thoughts, "how cam'st thou to eschew the old moss-ranging habits of thy kin? I trow, swankies of such breeding seldom take to burgher life. The ashen gad and plate coat likes them better than the best Flemish cloth doublet."

"Of a verity, it is so," replied Miles, hovering between a blush of shame and a sigh of regret. "They are, and always have been bold rufflers; caring for no havings save a hobby and its furniture."

"Ha, ha!" chuckled the knight, "they're

prudent men. They keep wise watch o'er their world's gear; ever sitting i' the middle o't."

"I might ha' cantered with the foremost;" pursued the bailiff, "but, when I was a green slip, my inches were o' the fewest, and I could ill hold up my head with an iron pot thereon. Rugging and reiving is a trade for big bones; so, 'stead o' shifting on the border, I shifted myself townward; and I think, in a fair way, I've not done the worse for't."

"Why, no, man," said Sir John, glancing round, "to judge by thy plenishing, thou hast not, i' faith!"

"The product o' my own moilings; neither wrung by force from foe, nor won by wile from neighbour."

"Then thou hast shot clear o' two tricks o' thy forebears, beside learning one they ne'er wot of. Well, I must needs gi' thee praise; albeit, I could ha' held thee assoilzied hadst followed a hardier calling."

"That is, venerable son," observed Father

Noel, who, in addressing the irritable knight found it expedient to stand more than usual upon his sacred vocation, “thou would’st rather see a Christian man ramp and ride o’er the earth, smiting and despoiling his brethern—marring what others make—ranging like a wolf among wolves,—than living as our great Lord hath commanded us, in peace and mutual good will. The which, moreover, it is his own best interest—his real mundane profit to do. Apply to experience:—had these sounder notions been more rife, thy goodly tower had stood this hour unharmed.”

“Tut! sir friar,” answered Sir John, peevishly, “the tonsure binds thee to preach lozel sufferance, and puny arms are fain to cry it up; but there it stops. Why, here’s our worthy host has freely owned, that lack of pith, more than of inkling, held him from the strife. Cogzounds! I don’t know, but, after all, he would, e’en yet like better to don a knapsap than a furred hood! What say’st thou, bailiff?”

The question touched honest Miles in a weak part. If he had an especial foible, it was to envy those who enacted deeds of manhood. His border nurture, though it failed to colour his career, still told itself in yearnings. He loved to hear and speak of prowess. Perhaps, like many of his unimposing personage, he imagined that by professing admiration for it, he gained a sort of implicatory reputation for corresponding spirit. Neither, though in a moment of candour he had confessed the fact, was he at all willing to acknowledge that poverty of bodily vigour *absolutely* restrained his martial ardours. Nor, whatever convictions might have pressed upon him during the first essays of youth, (made amongst a race, who, to this day, ever held him king who can furthest pitch the bar) was he, by any means, fully persuaded that he was now incompetent to take the field, should the burly time render it needful. At all events, he had no will that his friends should be so persuaded. His reply to the knight's

appeal brought out this feature of his character.

“As a hoastman, and a burgess”—said he, simpering—“it is my duty, as well as my interest, as the good father says—and I have found it such, to pursue the affairs of peace. Natheless, I have more than once gone out in graith, when the ruthless Scot has threatened our town, and may again. I was but a silly hoyt when I left Tyndale—a limber sapling that growth would have toughened. Had I biden my time; why I might, a—ahem—” here he paused; a little dubious what to say, and fain to let a significant jerk of the head supply an unchallengeable interpretation.

The friar took him up: “Thou might’st, my son, have been less useful, less worthy, and less honoured. What in youth thou thought’st, as I shrewdly see, a hardship, has proved to thee a grace. To be distinguished amid the slaves of brute force is, after much effort, only to be the leading bullock of a herd. The conflict of

men should be in that which separates them from the beast—their reason. Sit thankful, worthy bailiff, and be proud, that thou hast chosen the nobler battle.”

“The reverend father speaks soothly and sagely,” observed dame Farneley, who had been an attentive listener. “Trust me, husband, there’s more to be got by serving the friend, than thwacking the stranger. The times would roll smooth, if all men worked with one will, like the spokes of a wain;—an’ I see not why they shouldn’t.”

“Apt enough, daughter,” approved the friar. “Like these, they are all of the same material; only some are too long and some too short, which makes the circle go jolting.”

“I tell thee what, dame,” said Miles, “there is that reconciles me more to having left the dales, than all the learned clerk can say. Wot ye what that is?”

“No, truly, husband,” answered she, though the look which accompanied the query, was as

explicative to her as to the rest. "I keep keys to thy aumries, not to thy thoughts."

"Thou need'st none, chuck. And, for the nonce, I'd have them unlocked to all. They dwell on the luck of having thereby met so prizable a mate."

The eyes of the tender-hearted dame filled with grateful tears, as looking from her affectionate spouse to her gallant son, she seemed inwardly to bless Providence for the same dispensation.

The spectacle was dangerous to Amisia, for it awoke her fancy to views of happiness to which it had hitherto been a stranger.

"But father," demanded Hester, who, admiring the other sex chiefly in its most stern and commanding attributes, could not relish the Franciscan's philosophy, "if all men were of the drowsy humour and sluggish pursuit thou would'st have them, we would be surrounded by a race of churls. Where would be our heroes to inspire, and brave adventurers to protect?"

“ My hasty child,” rejoined Spalding ; “ dost not reflect, that then we should need none. There being no sword to menace, there lacks no buckler to defend.”

“ Well,” she ejaculated, with a shrug. “ If I were free to choose, I would rather watch in danger, and see valorous knights around me, than sleep in peace, to awake each morn amongst lurdanes and grovelling traffickers. Mercy on us ! what a rout for gentle dames to favour !”

“ These are the words of vanity and thoughtlessness”—reprehended Noel, in a pitying tone ; “ they call not for serious answer.”

“ Sure, father,” said Raimond, taking up the cudgels, “ thou would’st not see the land stripped of its stately nobles, and its gallant warriors ; our bulwarks in war, and graceful models in peace ? Where then were our spurs to emulation ? It is these who create a generous spirit in our breasts, and diffuse, wherever they appear, the lustre of greatness and the charms of

courtesy. Your policy would destroy, not perhaps their existence, but its best concomitants; for, without the exciting and invigorating exercise of arms, these would sicken and decline."

"What then"—demanded the friar, drily.

"Why then chivalry and its graces would be no more."

"Pooh!" sneered Noel, "will that cause any honest liegeman's heart to cool, or spoil the growth of fat beeves? Open thine eyes, young squire, and see that there are more people in the world than those who fool it at tilt and tourney."

Sir John, whose scanty acumen enabled him to understand the Franciscan only in a limited degree; yet caught enough wherein to discover, what was to him, outrageous scandal.

"Now, by God's santy!" he exclaimed, "thou art a fautor, there is no keeping terms withal. This railing at noble knights and glorious jousts may not be tolerated, even in a gownsman! Have a care, sir priest—have a care! Thy

speech smacks marvellously after the rebel parleys of yon Essex rabblement—of your Wraws and your Balls. It may bring thee to notice, and a shaved crown invites a cap of pitch and feathers. Bridle in, man, or worse may come on't."

A sudden and serious sally, levelled by one member of a previously quiet circle at another, always throws the rest into a temporary quandary—so at present, the good natured dame Farneley felt it, and cast about for some jocose turn whereby to restore the tone. Raimond was silent, and so, for a marvel, was the friar himself. As for the bailiff, he seemed in deep cogitation; perhaps, weighing the propriety of putting forth some shew of his magisterial character, in a matter of such nice involvement. Amisia and Hester, probably from their intimate knowledge of Sir John's humours, were least surprised, if not least disturbed.

"My father is too hard upon the reverend clerk," said Amisia, "he hath spoken in his

province, and but to repress the sins of strife and bloodspilling, which we all know to be against the canon."

"Canon or no canon," rejoined de Coupland, rising, "there's blood-spilling to be thought of to day, and I've been too forgetful on it. Sir squire, I will trouble thee for conduct to the lord-warden, thy master. I must make one at council. You know where he is lodged?"

"He is hard by, in the castle above," said Raimond, preparing to attend—"thither I will hold it an honour to marshal Sir John de Coupland."

"Thanks, fair youth! Thy company will not be unbeseeing; but guidance to the keep of the Newcastle, I lack none. Why, I hold lands by tenure to furnish a dozen men at arms for its defence! I would they were here! Let us hie, then, sir squire; but first, go don thy splents. Hotspur will hardly commend thy presence, flap-sleeved and galliarded after that fashion. Swith, about it."

Raimond, be it hinted, had that morning ‘cupidized’ with unusual care; and certainly was not quite in order for the steel saddle. He therefore, hastened away, threw off his gay tunic; changed a jaunty velvet cap for a bright bacinet,—and encased the well-moulded limbs, that had previously figured advantageously in tight peach-coloured hosen, with rigid greeves.

“Methinks,” observed the bailiff, after his son had retired, “I had as well myself slip on my brigandine and chaplet, and join our major, stout Adam de Bulkham. There will be mustering o’ the burgesses, I must raise my ward. You shall see, worshipful Sir John, that the good men o’ the canny town will not be backward in coming forward when the foe is at their gates.”

“Ha, ha! bailiff,” laughed Sir John, with a wink at Mouboucher, “an’ they were to advance in that fashion, they’d show an odd front to the Scot. Natheless, ’twould be good burgher caution, and may bring your slow bills more

steadily to knockchaps than if they had freer leave to count the odds o' the game."

"A fair jape, sir knight, a fair jape," returned Miles, somewhat discomfited. "Flesh is not fish, for all that! Dame, wilt see they bring out yon gear. I must be stirring. When times are pettish, a man's name is soon lost. Knaves' tongues never spare worship."

"Anon, anon!" replied the dame; who, after presenting spiced cups of clary to Sir John and Mouboucher, pressed also a huge one upon her husband. "Here, goodman, drink with a will to't. If there be such cry for gathering, I would not ha' thee behind thy fellows."

"Ay, ay, master bailiff, a deep draught, if thou'rt wise!" cried Sir John. "Odds heart! thy dame's a treasure! she knows well where a wight lacks strength in a stoure. Talk of harness! pish! 'tis the spirit must be harnessed."

Raimond now reappeared, and, together with Sir John and Mouboucher, departed to seek a more imposing scene. The first-mentioned had

already lingered on this spot longer than his active military education taught him to be proper at such a season ; but we are aware that “ Richard was not himself.” In justice, however, to his character in this respect, it is to be premised, that notwithstanding the lateness of his arrival on the preceding evening, he had then duly “ reported himself ” to his leader.

Father Noel, also, shortly issued abroad ; so that the three females were left to themselves. Amisia and the dame found a tolerably engaging topic of conversation, concerning which we have only been able to learn that it bore some relation to the youngest member of the latter’s family. But Hester had no better employment than to overlook the unusual passage and clamour in the street below, and to speculate on the amount of external menace which threw the townsfolk into such obvious ferment.

CHAPTER II.

What shall they seek the lion in his den,
And fright him there?

KING JOHN.

WHEN the current of story divides, by the separation of its *personæ*, we, whose *pleasing* duty it is to record their “outgoings and incomings,” not being gifted with the power of fixing the reader in two places at once, frequently hesitate whither, and with which person, to lead him in the first instance. And this, not upon any private considerations, but from a most disinterested wish always to gratify the identical expectancy most immediately excited. Tastes

vary, opinions differ;—thence oft comes a difficulty. Presuming, however, on the love of personal prowess and the things associated therewith, which seems to animate every living soul, even to the heel-armed city clerk and the spruce milliner before whom he exhibits, we here readily elect to proceed with the knight of Coupland and the Esquire Farneley, to the presence of the renowned Hotspur.

The castle, to which their steps turned, occupied the crown of the height upon the side whereof Miles Farneley's house was situated. From the back of the latter, a plot of garden-ground extended up the acclivity nearly to the outer walls of the fortress. Through this lay convenient access to a postern, which admitted the above parties, without the necessity of making any circuit. Once within the ballium, which enclosed an area including the whole summit of the eminence, and had no less than four distinct gates, the stupendous keep itself appeared in dark strong outline before them. It

was one of those massive square towers so prevalent in the military architecture of the Normans; but remarkable for exceeding loftiness and command. The angles of the huge pile stood a little relieved from the curtain, but not sufficiently to warrant giving them the name of flanking towers. Such as they were, they formed almost the sole break that occurred in any one of its four extensive faces; for the windows were few and small. Immediately around the foot of the keep was thrown a second wall, having only one entrance, strongly fortified. Directly herefrom, a broad flight of steps began to ascend to the last door-way, which, according to a principle common in these buildings, lay in an upper story. Such was the external semblance of a frowning hold, designed, with others of its kind, ostensibly to check the march of foreign inroad, but serving also to overawe the villein multitude; they of which, like the gardener's ass, had small choice in masters under whom they were equally condemned to carry paniers.

The ward, or bailey, was at this moment filled with armed vassals and other retainers : some called in hastily to fulfil the terms of their tenures ; others belonging to the regular train of the Lord Warden. Bluff archers, in hoods of mail and haquetons of proof, were mingled in disorderly knots, with grim men-at-arms panoplied to the teeth. The crescent cognizance distinguished most of them ; for, in addition to obvious reasons, the Earl of Northumberland was, by royal deputation, constable of the place. A few esquires and simple spears, differently cognized, sauntered about, raising the presumption that other chiefs were congregated within the donjon.

Expectancy sat on all faces, and some interesting communication seemed momentarily expected. Many might be observed casting their eyes upwards to the battlements, as if engaged in a profitless attempt to divine the counsels of certain parties posted thereon, whose figures were partially discernible. In the same man-

ner, we often observe mobs of rustics assembled to gaze on the outside of a court-house, a prison, or a caravan ; though not, thereby, a whit wiser than if they had stared so long at the rafters of their own cabins. Accosting, as he passed, some of these gapers, Raimond learnt the import of the symptoms.

That the Douglas, taking advantage of the open and unprepared state of the country, had pushed his ravages on towards the verge of Yorkshire, he was already aware, and also able to surmise that his retrograde should be expected forthwith ; but, now, he heard that it had already commenced, and was bending in a very near direction : further, he found, that the excitement, and upturning of eyes, arose from a general understanding that actual signs of approaching vicinity were noticeable by those seen perched aloft. Their anxiety thus quickened, the old knight and himself lost no time in pressing on to nicer information.

Ascending into the great hall, which in chill,

dusky magnitude, occupied the larger portion of a story, they plunged among a throng of loiterers of the same warlike cast as those below. Bills, bows, lances, and shields, were ranged around the walls in such number, as betokened the lately exaggerated strength of the garrison. Warders, servitors, and even pages, bustled or idled, as the case might be ; but the freedom of their motions, and the boisterous clamour of their speech, showed the restraint imposed by worshipful presence to be wanting. Inquiry produced in explanation, that the warden and associate knights were then removed from vicinage, they being the parties engaged in viewing, *ex-culminibus*, the distant prognostics of hostility.

Sir John, impatient of delay, and anxious on many accounts to partake in the counsels of the time, expressed a desire to be instantly conducted to the airy assembly of his compeers. In compliance, Raimond led the way into a long chain of galleries and staircases, which,

carried through the thickness of the walls, formed the ascent to the regions in alt.

“ ‘Sbody ! but this is a toil I wist not of ! ” exclaimed the old banneret, heartily wearied of his climbing task, yet scorning to complain of the too active lead that rendered it more painful ; “ these turnings and risings put one in double jeopardy, of either breaking neck, or wind, or both. If the raging Scot that has cooked us this mess get not a hotter brewst thrown scalding in his mazzard, I’ll forswear country and turn heathen Turk ! ”

The last words were uttered in issuing out upon the platform of the ramparts, and thence caught by a young knight, fully armed, who chanced to be near.

“ Thou shalt not need, Sir John,” said he ; “ our churchmen shall have no cause to denounce such a scandal, nor our country to deplore such a loss. If we score not the tale of thy smoking tower upon the backs of these invaders with a sharp penner, may I never win

smile from lady fair; and worse, may I endure the frowns of the fairest—thy daughter!”

“Oh! I doubt not, Sir Knight of Raby,” said Sir John. “Thou hast a clerkly hand for such a penner, I’ve been told. Use it firmly; this legend must not be blotched.”

“If it is, ’twill be with blood-red ink,” returned the self-assured youth. “But tell me, sir, how has the morrow found the lady Amisia?”

“Kindly, Sir Rafe, kindly,” replied de Coupland. “But by your leave, yonder is the Warden, and I crave speedy speech of him.”

With that apology he passed on.

The aerial station just attained, presented the semblance of a considerably flagged square, surrounded by a very low battlement. In fitting situations were planted mangonels and petraries, near to which lay huge piles of stones, the sort of ammunition necessary for their employment. Generally speaking, these machines had at this period given way to the use of a primitive species of culverin, but the extreme perpendicular

height of the keep caused them to be still retained, as there most available. The prospect from hence was very fine, including a bird's eye view of the whole town, and much of the environs. The broad flood of the Tyne rolled past the base of the castle hill ; beyond which, to the south, the ground rose gradually until it terminated to sight in the barren highland still known by the name of Gateshead-fell. Westward of this, the country declined into a beautiful vale, stretching from its debouchure upon the banks of the river almost as far as the city of Durham. In this direction it was that the earnest regards of the Warden and his friends were, at the time being, collectively cast. Before, however, proceeding to tell what was there observable, it is meet to take some account of the observers.

First amongst these, conspicuous equally from their erect manly figures, and from the air of frank command with which, while contrasting in years, they mingled with eldern knights,

were the two Percies. Hotspur, in particular, would have attracted the on-looker's notice, by his flushed cheek, flaming eye, and warmth of gesture; the last being exhibited in a fervid address to his companions. He was only partially mailed; his head, neck, and arms, being without helme, gorget, vantbrace and gauntlet. The deficit obviously arose from his having slept in the castle, and having, moreover, probably hurried up hither, in his impatience, before he had completed his arming. Indeed, scarce any of the knights, though all prepared for the field, were equipped entirely cap-a-pie. Those who have no truer idea of a suit of armour, than that it was the heroic costume—the hussar jacket and pelisse of our ancestors, must be told that it was by no means a guise eligible to lounge in, but one assumed only at the last minute of necessity.

In the group before us, were Sir Matthew Redmayne, or Redman, the governor of Berwick, who chanced to be hereabout; Sir Thomas

Grey, lord of Wark castle; and Sir James Harbottel, all valiant knights; especially the two first, who were experienced veterans. Near, also, but admitted only to a limited sort of acknowledgment, stood a large framed burly person, in a quilted jerkin of proof, overlaid by a scarlet surcoat. He was the mayor of the town, by name, Adam de Bulkham. There were others; but it is not essential to trouble the reader with a prolonged nomenclature. By most of the above Sir John was recognized, and warmly greeted, as an esteemed and well-remembered baron of the march; by Hotspur, amongst the earliest and sincerest.

“Ha! bold Sir John of Coupland,” he exclaimed, wringing the old knight’s hand, “I am right glad to see thee here; tho’ I could wish thou hadst come in other fashion, with a choice plump of spears at thy back. We lack such comers full sore, as these gentlemen say.”

“And as Sir Harry Percy must know,” subjoined Sir Matthew Redmayne, sharply, unless

he think men-at-arms are to be overthrown by a rabble of hobbyless townsmen, armed only with quarter-staves."

"Bows and bills, Sir Matthew," threw in the Mayor—"wambais and iron chaplet. Not a burgess but stands so provided for the town's defence."

"For *that* duty they may need them presently, Master Mayor," returned Redmayne; "and, mayhap, do good service: beyond the walls they will be but as a rig of tall rye to a career of lances; of which, we're told, the Scot has a passing power."

"We have heard of thy surprizal, Sir John," said Percy, continuing to address that party, without regarding the last speakers. "I condole with thee upon it."

"I'd rather thou'dst promise me vengeance," said Sir John.

"Why, hast thou heard that I have changed my name and cognizance?" demanded the other—"hast heard my father has declared me

bastard? hast heard the Brabant lion has been physicked; that you require such of me?"

"Nay, nay, I've heard none o' these, and an' I had, I'd still ha' put trust in thy nature. But, touching my vassals, I do but wait some share in thy avizements, ere I dispatch old Mouboucher to bring them in."

"Look ye here, Sir John," said Hotspur, leading him to the edge of the battlement, and pointing along the vale (of Ravensworth) before alluded to, "see'st thou the hot wreaths of mischief that sail along yon hill side—there—and there—and there. Rising, not in one, but many places. They smitch the brightness of the morning, and not less that of our arms. You see, Sir John, the deeds the Douglas flouts us with—are they pleasant to behold?"

"Mass, no! They are abominable eyesores."

"Especially to the honourable conservator of the marches," observed young Neville, flipantly, and somewhat sarcastically.

“And must be more so to the baron of Brancepeth and of Raby,” retorted Hotspur, “unless, for privy reasons, these demesnes have escaped harm from a foray which, or we’re misinformed, has visited their quarter. But this is from the matter. Sir knight of Coupland, thou art known for a tried warrior; shall we remain here, like earthed foxes, waiting the muster of distant friends; or shall we out at once—cry ‘Esperance’ for Percy, and fall on?—the last is my say.”

“And mine, Sir Harry”—seconded the intemperate old knight, his judgment enfeebled by age, and his blood heated by the recollection of his own misadventure.

“De Coupland,” interposed de Grey, “I marvel to hear thee—a banneret of experience, give such hasty counsel. To risk a battle, without one moiety of the strength we may expect, almost ere nightfall, were a wilful sacrifice to the enemy. Besides, is it becoming our duty as liege men to expose this great frontier-

town to the chances of a mad-brained outbreak? The king will not believe it."

"The townsmen can keep their gates without the aid of chivalry"—said de Balkham, pompously—"they've done it before, an' I don't think they were then the better helped with a mayor."

"Now, I dare swear!" resumed de Grey, "the lord bishop will be upon their heels. Let us but be assured of that, and then we will so springe these ravagers, that not a man shall scape to tell King Robin how his best have fared."

"When did the manhood of Northumberland ask aidance from the bishopric to keep the border?" demanded Hotspur, in querulous mood.

"Asked, or not,"—remarked de Neville, proudly, "its lances have ne'er been found slow to gather, nor sluggish in the fray. They ride for England, whoever leads."

"And if that be Percy, will they fight the worse?"

“ I say not so”—replied Sir Rafe, “ I know no better knight, though, mayhap, some as good—twixt Tyne and Tees, too.

“ Oh ! that, and welcome, coz”—returned Hotspur, recovering his good humour, “ I’d give my chance of an earldom for a round hundred such, here at this hour; and be content to count thee for one. But did I not, just now, see my esquire—ah ! yes—Farneley, hither man ! Give these knights a satisfaction they have this while been craving. Detail thy late observances,—Sir Matthew,—Harbottel—resolve yourselves.”

Raimond was accordingly subjected to an examination, the result of which still more impressed upon the minds of the older leaders, the expediency of cautious proceeding. Even Hotspur, whom a hurried interview on the foregoing evening had progressed only with a limited apprehension of facts, became sensible of it.

“ The existence of so large a force as that under Fife and Stratherne,” he observed, “ lying within the range of co-operation with Douglas,

is, I admit, a consideration of weight. Yet, are we not led to believe their route is on the western coast?"

"As supposed"—rejoined de Grey, "but how know we for surety? or granting it so, in the first instance, what may not still remain an ulterior design? The armies may easily conjoin; should it be deemed in any way desirable."

"Then, what is more immediate"—added Redmayne, "the strength and quality of Douglas' force, composed, as it seems, of all Scotland's best lances, may not be safely shocked on open ground, even with treble the number of such unfurnished and unpractised bands as we can now command."

This truth was confessed by all, for it appealed to a disposition common amongst the knights and men-at-arms of that day, to regard every other species of combatants as mere cumbrous accessories. As auxiliaries, they overlooked them, and as opponents, held them in

little more respect than a troop of life-guards holds a mob of Spitalfields weavers. It was, indeed, in reference to this, and not owing to a mere deficiency of men, that the Northumbrian chiefs had from the first endured any hesitation. For it may easily be imagined, that a single province could not on the instant spur of occasion collect a body of trained cavaliers, able to compete with an embattlement purposely organized from half a nation.

“We shall not require thee further, Farneley,” said Hotspur, dismissing his esquire from that respectful attendance on the pleasure of the knights, which the strict etiquette of chivalry demanded in its *élèves*. “Be, however, in sight—yet—stay, hear me a word. Thou hast borne thyself in these late transactions, as becomes a right trusty ’squire. Continue the like, and sooner or later, thou wilt win a name.”

“Did yon Moray think the march had got a woman for its warden, ’mid the choppings of

the time"—he resumed, speaking to his friends, "or had the moon wrought on him, that he dared so to misuse an English 'squire?"

"Ay, and did he deem de Coupland forgotten, because old?" cried Sir John, with a bitter inflection, "that he dared to taunt him in his own hall. 'Sdeath! if a younger arm be not beforehand with me, I'll try the toughness of his proof mail myself!"

"Go to, then, Sir John! the very thought makes me blush," said Percy. "'Twere a shame would sting for ever, did we leave such an adventure to thy gray hairs. There are many will covet the chevisaunce. Sir knight of Raby, shall we not strike manfully for the Coupland—for the sire of the beauteous Amise—hey?"

"In mine own behalf, I stand pledged, Sir Harry," returned Neville; "and will be content to call the knight who outdoes me in the test, better deserving of the lady's favour."

At this juncture fresh evidences of the enemy's proximity became palpable; bodies of them

could now be seen descending the slopes leading to the river, as if bound towards a ford a few miles above the town. This gave a new impulse to the general discourse. Two persons, however, the Neville and Sir Ralph Percy, pursued the last topic, and a third, Raimond Farneley, became a casual and uneasy auditor of its personal turn.

“I fancy, coz and namesake,” said Sir Ralph, “thou wilt find competitors in the work that is to lead to that same favour.”

“Oh! doubtless! from the gallant Warden himself down to his coystrell esquire,” rejoined Neville, giving a contemptuous glance at him he meant to indicate.

“Well, and say such a promising springald were to have advantage o’er thee, in the lay thou hast just made —”

“Why then a new baldrick and a purse of marks be his guerdon, and so enough of him. I spoke of striving against gentle knights, and would’st not have an idle quip infer that I took

note whatever base-bred churl might strain to overdo his devoir."

On having his ear offended by the above insolent speech, whereof he did not mistake the application, Raimond felt the necessity of retiring to greater distance. Strong, however, as was the restraint his situation laid him under, before moving aside he solicited the eye of the speaker, and bestowed on him a proud retorting scowl. Sir Ralph Percy saw the passage, and conjectured its occasion.

"Cousin Rafe," said he, "if thou wilt be harsh in sentiment, at least be guarded in delivery. For mine own part, I would rather hock my best courser than offend an honest mind, as I fear thou hast done e'en now."

"Essoin me!" said Neville, "in that the man is a dependant of your house. The truth is, he crossed me somewhat yesternight, and thou knowest I'm hasty in expression, being moved."

“ Ho, ho !” thought Sir Ralph, upon whom a broader light began to break: “ What, thou dost dislike the youth for being too near the lady Amise, and he claiming some grace for share in her late rescue? ’Tis an enviable position, by my fay !”

“ Why, in the same sort, so is that of her groom or her greyhound.”

“ Not so, friend ! Prithee, is it so wholly new a matter, to hear of gentle squire superseding stately knight? Besides, he who bears his lord’s scutcheon to-day, may to-morrow have his own borne before him.”

“ How if he should lack arms wherewith to grace a scutcheon ?”

“ Oh ! he’ll win them when he wins his spurs,” rejoined Sir Ralph, slighting the illiberal allusion, and willing to torment his kinsman’s mood.

“ Time was, when none but gentlemen of three pure descents dreamed of such honours. I

like not to see the natural bounds of chivalry o'erpassed. The custom will end in its degeneracy."

"Folly, man! judicious infusions keep it healthy. Your mightiest cavalier is surely your truest knight. If, indeed, a man could bring all the ancestors he counts into the field at his back, he might fairly be allowed credit according to their number."

"You strangely underrate the illustrious line through which you draw the blood of Manfred."

"No, i' faith! I'm mighty proud thereof; because I think I feel the promptings of that blood, and I am sure of a wish to emulate those who have transmitted it to me. What, then? I am not modest enough to go to sleep upon *their* fame. I would fain strike a little bargain with posterity for myself."

Whilst the young noblemen pursued this colloquy, Raimond, stationed in an opposite corner

of the ramparts, laboured under any thing but agreeable sensations. He believed that the unhandsome terms in which he had heard himself designated, would in all likelihood be further followed up, and his ear tingled with the imagined sounds. By the by, it is somewhat remarkable, that the external surface of the organ which would have conveyed to us the sense of a personal insult, should absolutely burn and suffuse at the secret suspicion of it ; though we are not in the first, and what may be supposed the more painful case, conscious of a similar affection. The esquire also justly conceived that he had a friendly upholder in Sir Ralph Percy ; yet could he less easily endure that conviction than the other. There is a humiliation accompanies the consciousness of being defended—bolstered up, as it were, by a cotemporary of one's own date and pursuits, which a man of spirit can never cheerfully support. To Raimond it was intolerable ; for he was aspiring—knew

his own intrinsic deserts to be inferior to none—and, therefore, winced at the idea of owing consideration only to patronizing sufferance.

The speculations of the warden and his circle were at length brought to a termination, by the arrival of a scout, who communicated certain intelligence, that the Scots were then fording the river; and upon his heels came a second, to announce that their van had positively taken the road towards the town.

New resolutions and instant bustle succeeded the receipt of this news; for hitherto a grave attack upon the town itself had barely been anticipated as a possibility.

“Now, by the mortal ashes of St. Oswin!” exclaimed Hotspur, when this intention seemed certified to him, “I am hugely glad on’t! If we can but cause these overbold fools to waste a day or two before these walls, the earl will by that time have made his levies to cut them off. It shall be my fault if they lack employment in the meanwhile. Away and arm, sirs, we’ll meet

them at the barriers !—there, at least, we can have sport on equal terms. They shall have knightly exercise to while away the hours until it be our cue to quell them outright. Good master Mayor, raise up your burgesses !—bid them to the walls ! Should they not have deeds to do, they shall have some to witness. Farneley, see thou to my destrier, and be near me ! ”

The issue of these mandates was followed by a general descent from the platform ; each hastening to complete his equipment and all more or less

“ With soul in arms, and eager for the fray.”

CHAPTER III.

Their neighing coursers eager of the spui,
Their armed staves in hand, their beavers down,
Their eyes of fire sparkling through sights of steel,
And the loud trumpets blowing them together.

HENRY IV. SECOND PART.

THE old inhabitants of the Newcastle, notwithstanding the influence of monkish example, and the by-laws left to record their reprobation of the wild manners of the neighbouring dalesmen, were still, owing to a disturbed experience, a race of no pre-eminently peaceful character. Hence the present occasion was one which created more tumult than dismay. The able-bodied male population, indeed, seemed more exhilarated than otherwise by the prospect of warlike

doings. Numbers of these, harnessed in wambais (a kind of thick stuffed doublets) and iron chaplets, with sheaves of arrows at their backs, and long bows in their hands, might now be seen hastening clamorously to the walls. Many, accustomed to pass much of their leisure in the practice of archery, were not sorry to have an opportunity of shooting at something more *interesting* than a wooden butt. There came with it all the difference that the modern sportsman feels between firing at a sheet of paper, and knocking down a blackcock. Others, shouldering every modification of partisan, gisarme, and brownbill, also strode along; and the frequent hallooing and brandishing of weapons, shewed that few were willing their alacrity should be overlooked. Several of the superior order of burgesses, wearing the pliant brigandine in preference to armour of plate, paraded slowly towards the western quarter of the town, which promised to be the earliest scene of action. The younger, gaily mounted, and aping the manner

of the chivalry, might be noticed to throw frequent glances at the crowded windows; anxious to ascertain whether the dames and maide took due notice of their valorous demonstrations. The slightly fearfraught countenances of these latter, far from daunting their relatives and admirers, had rather a contrary effect. For the consciousness of standing in the light of protectors to a weaker party always stimulates courage: we contrast our strength with their incompetency, and therefrom derive a kind of assurance;—or, otherwise, we find our bosoms swell with a generous sense of obligation.

The ancient burgh, we have before described, as being environed by an embattled circumvallation, was flanked and strengthened by towers, so as then to boast all the security which would now be sought for in bastions, ravelins, and covered way. Where the great high-roads entered stood massive and stately ports, supplied with the usual defences. Beyond these, towards the country was, in each case, fixed a

fence of palisadoes, which, taking in a portion of the ground immediately in front of the gate, raised an obstacle to impede any sudden dash of the enemy's horse. This outthrown hindrance was common to the fortification of the period, and well known by the name of the barriers.

In the area so protected, it was customary at the first investment of a fortress, and even occasionally during a siege, for the chief warriors amongst the besieged to congregate, and maintain gratuitous contests of rivalry with the same class amongst their adversaries. The encounters were usually accompanied with a certain honourable understanding, which gave to the exhibition the character of a tournament, rendered infinitely more moving by the zest of actual warfare. Many of the most brilliant feats of arms on record were performed under such auspices; and skirmishes, attended with much inveteracy and bloodshed were of constant occurrence.

To the barriers at the western gate of the

Newcastle we now resort. In the enclosure behind, the English chivalry were fast assembling. It already glittered with arms, and shone gay with waving plumes and pennons. Here a throng of steel-clad knights and esquires waited impatiently the approach of the Scots: their barbed destriers prancing and pawing the ground. It was a gallant muster; including, of noble names hitherto unmentioned in our pages, the brothers Umfreville, kinsmen to Percy; the son of Lord Fitzhugh; Lumley of Lumley; and the youthful hope of the Delavals. There were other good knights and gentlemen; chiefly such cavaliers of the march as the emergency had drawn together on short summons. The warden, a host in himself, occupied a central station amongst his compeers, cased cap-a-pee in a suit of polished plate armour. It was of Milan steel; but plain and service-like. His beaver being thrown up, his bold features appeared, lightening with a double flame of the martial fire tha

unceasingly burned within : his charger, a high trained sorrel of powerful make, shook the firm earth with his ponderous gambades.

The ground in front of the expectants, rose in a gentle acclivity to the westward, directly over which ran the road whereon the foe was known to be advancing. Suspense on the subject soon ceased, for in brief time the summit of the swell bristled with hostile spears. These deploying, to use a military phrase, gave place to a deep column of infantry, and the whole, forming into battalia, took a position threatening the opposed face of the town.

A loud shout from the walls expressed the defiance of the townsmen ; whilst a clashing of shields and vociferation of war-cries conveyed the challenge of the knights. These were promptly reiterated by the Scots ; and, incontinently, a select band of their men-at-arms, distinguished as comprising chiefs rather by their pennons than their equipment, began to approach the barriers.

Many hearts beat tumultuously at this sight, and none more so than that of our young friend Farneley. To win a name—to obtain a footing in the ranks of honour was his darling object, and he knew it was only to be obtained by proving, on an occasion like this, the weight of his arm, the toughness of his cranium, and the bone of his good steed. All poor vouchers for merit, but such as the ‘wisdom’ then admitted as incontestible. To give proof in that way, he was, however, as service-seekers report of themselves, ‘able and willing.’ Sir Rafe Neville too, was near;—to make *him* confess his worth would be a special triumph.

The Scottish company advanced quietly to within a few yards of the barrier, and then drew rein, it being evidently their wish to invite some parley prior to hostilities. In the warfare of these days, when personal feelings had so large a share of influence, this was by no means a novel incident. Thus approximated, a considerable contrast was visible in the exterior

seeming of each nation's leaders. For, albeit, amongst the Scots, were present all those potent barons we have before had occasion to enumerate, as well as a mass of reputable knights, yet the dinginess of their armour, and the absence of ornament, gave the group a russet appearance. On the other hand, the English glistened in burnished mail, with floating plumes, rich baldricks and emblazoned housings. Nevertheless, on either side the array was imposing in all that constitutes the real excellence of warriors ; the aggregate gathering appearing to view as fine a body of lances as any quarter of Christendom could then have produced. Whatever animosity might inflame the souls of these opposing bands, they could have no inducement to underrate each others prowess. They had shocked too often, and too roughly, not to be well aware of a common property in the same sturdy materials.

Hotspur, on recognising the persons of the hostile chieftains, pushed his horse close to the

palisades, and was about to address them in no amicable terms, when he was anticipated by the voice of Douglas himself.

“Ha! sir warden!” cried he, “hast thou ta’en counsel of such prudence, that thou hurriest to offer us the keys e’en ere we make demand; or comest thou to market with us for appaticisement?”*

“I come, sir Scot,” replied Percy, striking into heat—“to see what mad-brained venturers ye are—what self-spitted wild geese!—and yet, ’mass! I’m wrong to treat ye with discourtesy; seeing that thus, unasked, ye proffer your dear lifeblood to fertilize our fields. ’Tis a generous pilgrimage ye ride.”

“Generous, indeed!” echoed Douglas, with a derisive laugh, “and withal considerate; sith we have lighted ample funeral piles, and shall yet light more, ere tasking thee to give us all the *coup de grace*.”

* A term for a sort of town-ransom.

“ By the blood of my father !” exclaimed Sir Henry, “ ye had better have singed your own tawny beards—ay, flayed your cheeks—than have burnt a single hayrick in Northumberland.”

“ We burn castles, not hayricks, hot Percy,” bravadoed our acquaintance Moray. “ We’ve promised our followers a rummage through the storeshops of yon gaping burghers ; else, we had before this warmed our hands at Alnwick.”

“ ’Twas a thrifty promise,” observed Sir Rafe Neville, sarcastically, “ and a right needful to the route I see before me. Pray ye, be advised ; —if there be knights among ye,—as I’m fain to suppose there are—that they assume some better badge of distinction, some mark, whereby we may know from whom to take parole. As ye ook, I by Heaven ! I know not lord from lurdane !”

“ Care not for that, Sir Cockerel ! replied Douglas, contemptuously. “ Thou at least, art

not likely to be tried with such embarrassment. Thy concern with parole, will be but when to give it seasonably."

The Knight of Raby's pride was much stung by this slight upon his prowess. He retorted; but with such a voluble excess of ire as bordered on the preposterous.

"Hey-day! what peevish railster is this?" cried Douglas. "Harkee, youngling! we'll send thee into Scotland, where our dames shall quell thy spirit with their crisping-tongs. A hoary knight of thy complexion, he of Coupland, hath been already put i' the way of such a lesson. He shall have companions."

"Marry, now!" sputtered a cracked voice, "that same knight would not wish for better than he is now amongst, to trounce the best Douglas, that ever pricked in Lothian, or Liddersdale."

This was Sir John himself, who could not be restrained from riding forth to witness, if not to share in the proceedings of the day.

“How is this!” exclaimed several of the Scots, in surprise. “De Coupland!”

“Ay, himself. Your fathers knew his presence by instinct, and scampered without waiting to see him.”

“Percy,” said Douglas, “go matters so ill with you that the palsied hands of dotards are impressed to aid thy battle? This old knight were better in his dormitory.”

“Tis his brave heart, and not our wishes brings him here,” returned Hotspur; “yet, being here, he reminds us of the reckoning thou, Douglas, art in our debt. But, wherefore this parley? there can be neither compromise nor compliment, ’twixt thou and I.”

“No, indeed! I sought it but to tell thee to thy face, that Douglas will no longer permit a petulant whipster to cry mastery upon the border. Out, Percy, out! and let good steel and lusty arms to work in open field.”

“If thou mean’st to personal shock of arms,” quick rejoined Percy, “right joyfully will I

grant thy prayer. Oh, Scot ! you spur an eager steed. Day, night, place, arms—I heed not !— Giving all unto thy choice and ’vantage, I do defy and challenge thee.”

A murmur of voices from the Scottish side, intimated a desire that the English would issue forth and join in general engagement.

Sir Matthew Redmayne, who, we have already seen was of opinion that

“ ————— discretion
And hardy valour are the twins of honour.”

probably fearing Hotspur’s impetuosity, lost no time in throwing in an answer to the demand.

“ In what regards our main intendment,” said he, “ we will follow our own judgment ; not cast aside our wits and borrow direction from false-meaning foemen. Doubt not our pleasure will be swith to give ye all rueful employment ; till then, such as are passing heady, shall, lance for lance, be roundly entertained. Who dares the Redmayne ?”

“ I, and I !” burst from several of the Scots.

“ And who Ralph Percy ?” cried that young knight. “ But no, I will not wait to catch a mad-brain.—Let the best reported Scot that follows Douglas look upon his challenger.”

His defiance was promptly taken up by Moray, who felt no modesty restrain him from assuming the implied distinction.

Similar challenges were iterated and reiterated in abundance, for independently of national spirit, there were few present who did not discover some individual in the adverse ranks against whom he indulged a grudge.

The heroes of Homer, if inference is good for any thing, well knew the hitch that feasting gives to valour ; and the Caledonian knights, albeit of a race not remarkable for table luxury, shewed at this time a substantial identity of sentiment. This might be gathered from the result of a brief consultation which immediately took place. Perhaps, most of them being aware that they

had staked their lives and honour upon a very nice hazard, were unwilling to omit any prudential preparative.

“ The morning’s ride, Percy,” said Douglas, after the communing had ended, “ while it has dashed the ardour of our steeds, has somewhat quickened the cravings of our own bodies. We must repair the one and remove the other. The sun is eke too high and hot; when it is lower, we will give thee meeting.”

“ Ay, ay, go to nuncheon,” grumbled De Coupland, “ ’tis plain our English beef is not forgotten. Make much of it; ’twill be long or your thin kale may be again so seasoned.”

Douglas and his compatriots anon withdrew to their forming encampments, and the barriers, for the present, were emptied of occupants.

CHAPTER IV.

————— Who comes here ?

Save ye, gentlemen!

Steph.—Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility.

BEN JONSON.

TIME, mowing down the hours, the chivalry of both borders again assembled to contest the palm of excellence in the noble art of offence — noble, at least, in so far as that it was then consecrated to the use of high-born practitioners. First one and then another pair of gallant knights presented themselves, to prove the steadiness of their seats and firmness of their hands. Many careers were run, with various success. Lances were shivered and helmets battered,

without any very serious consequences accruing to either party. Thanks to the unwieldy panoply wherein the warriors of this day contended, single combats were seldom productive of fatal results. They were thereby not only shielded from the force of strokes, but well nigh incapacitated to deal them. In the tramp and rush of a general *mêlée* the case might be different; but to that, affairs did not tend in the present instance.

These desultory displays might have engaged a less summary description; but having a more important repetition of the scene hereafter to detail, we are here discreetly concise. Whether the two great rivals of the time, personally encountered, or not, in this preliminary passage of arms, the chronicles have left in obscurity. The ebullient temper of both, makes the former probable; yet if so the fact, it is clear the collision must have been neither decisive nor satisfactory. At any rate, nothing in the afternoon's bitter jousts contributes to the matter of our

story, saving, perhaps, that Raimond Farneley added greatly to his previous reputation as an accomplished man-at-arms. A good fortune certainly not depreciated in value, by being promulgated immediately under the eyes of those with whom, warrior as well as prophet, ever gains the most niggard honour—his neighbouring fellow countrymen.

To none did the successful bearing of the young esquire give such intense gratification as to his partial sire. The hankering admiration which honest Miles confessed for the great game of war, notwithstanding his having thought proper to abandon a life of rude action for the traffic of the mart, has before been hinted.

“Who will object me now, to a sprinkling of the wild blood of Tynedale?” quoth he, exultingly, to Adam de Bulkham, as they returned homewards together after the bustle of the day was over—“I trow ’tis the genuine oil should bathe the joints of a champion—ay, had he to do battle for a nation’s name.”

“Hem!—Or carry feud for a kinsman slain in a Tivdale barnekin,” rejoined the mayor, with a sly leer.

“Well, and what then?” interrupted the bailiff, “blood for blood is man’s law, in all lands. I’ve heard the sacristan of the Black Friars say there’s gospel for’t. Where amends cannot be had by hook they must be ta’en by crook, and belike your fell ruffler, may be as thoroughly ruled by the fear of a clansman’s brand, as the thought o’ the hangmen’s knot. The hill spirit’s keen, and ready wrong needs ready wrack.”

“Nay, pize on’t, brother! that would ne’er come to order; for then a thick skin would be a patent o’ privilege to all misdeeds. We might fling away our bench gowns and stick for aye to brigandine and chaplet; the which is mighty irksome wearing in a summer’s noon.”

Here the worthy functionary wriggled and fidgetted in his rigid investiture, as though feelingly alive to the discomfort.

“I yield thee reason,” conceded Miles, who

had a great respect for his own post of office, and felt somewhat vexed that he had unguardedly avowed a too significant toleration of the dalesmen's lawless lives. "Mine was but an idle overstretch. Men of worship must have reverence, and grave authority be upheld to curb the unruly. Natheless, let me tell thee, friend Adam, an' it were not for the rough moss rangers overby, we might ha' these saucy Scots full oftener hanigauding at our gates."

"And, so they get no further, we o' the canny town need not complain. Marry, I don't know but its all in our way! The cavaliers crowd in, and drop their gold pieces 'mong us pretty freely, ere they get leave to 'part. Why thou art thyself i' the luck o' some such profit if it be, as I hear, the rich old baron of Coup-land now abodes with thee."

"I am proud to say my roof is so far favoured; but I make no market of my hospitality," said the bailiff, adding a superlative grandeur to his strut.

“La ! how short we are ! Why, gossip, thou wert wont to understand the truck of meal for malt as well as most of thy guild. Thou wilt not lip a thorn without ’tis streaked with honey.”

“My guest sits in all honourable entertainment.”

“Umph ! Our worshipful bailiff, I fancy, now that his boy squires it in a noble train, means to take state, and keep wassail like a lord of land. Much good may it do him !”

“And if by God’s willing, his substance allows him, what neighbour’s nose need drop ?”

“Oh ! none of right. But methinks it were an unthrifty vanity to waste that substance in feasting scorners, for the thankless guerdon of a ‘good dog’ commendation. Such is the best return the largesses of our class ever wring from your men of pedigree. ’Tis not worth having a gift, and to buy it hard, is a point of folly. Whip me, if I care to bend and scrape to catch a gentle’s half-cap !”

“Enough, master mayor. Thou hast thy

view, and I have mine. They differ, and so thou wilt the more think, when I tell thee that I intend this very night to throw open my doors to all the noble knights now in our town, and with dance and revel celebrate my Raimond's worthiness. My poor mansion shall put forth its best to those who please to grace it. Of which number I trust thou, Adam, thy dame, and comely daughters, will make an esteemed portion. Trust me, whate'er *thy* humour, *they* will not grant their presence less willingly, for that they may meet with gallants of condition."

"No, by my fay! I wot they will not," returned his worship, smilingly. "Nor do I myself eschew the commingling further than as a thing not to be coveted at price, if one would 'scape a back cast of heartburn. In especial—as thou, master Miles, being a brother in office, should know—we, who have worship in our proper place, take but ill to be elbowed to the lower end of the board by a stern eyed Umfraville, and, peradventure, pelted with saucy japes

by a malapert Neville. We do not, then, wag our beards so merrily as when at wassail with our own guildry, I trow."

"Tut, tut, man ! it all goes by degree, up tree and down. The proud knight that gives us the rebuff to-day, screws in his state, and takes the cold shoulder from a belted earl to-morrow, and he in turn, the next day, drops head and knee to the crowned king. There's a chain of us, gossip, whereof the like of thou and I are middle links ; if we hang not to those above, the rest below will pull us down. What, if the holding crook fret a little ? better that than lie clanking and clashing in a heap to fret all over. For my own part, (proceeded the bailiff, pleased with his rhetoric,) I love your high blood and your chivalry ! There's a free open-handed spirit and bold bearing in't that we traders lack woundily. Oh ! master Bulkham ! did it not make thy heart leap to see the brave knights this very afternoon, couch lance and bound away as tho' the deadly attaint were but the

threatened tap of a lady's whipstock. Shall they not have honour, I say; and shall not Miles Farneley, tho' a simple burgess, offer his humble meed?"

"Aye, indeed;—and shall they not receive thy courtesy in that sort? Sooth, to speak, bailiff, thou art the prince of hoastmen, and leave the mayor at little charge to maintain the borough's fair repute. Heaven forefend thou takest not to spear-breaking thyself, and so put our boast of thee in jeopardy!"

"Your worship gibes," said Miles, nothing displeased at having the possibility of such an event—that is to say, the initiatory part of it—made matter of surmise. "Soh! here comes one I like not;—Master Snifbodle the Cordiner. His heart's in the leaguer yonder, or would be, if the greedy self-seeking scroyle were blest with such thing. He came into the town a ragged whelp, yet they say the grown cur will one day back to Scotland with a fat pouch. He looks as tho' he would join company. I'll shog off;

the alley here will serve my turn. God gi'r worship pleasance, until we meet anon !”

So saying, the bailiff posted down a side-way, anxious to sound in the ear of his dame that most soul-stirring trump to female apprehension—the charge to prepare a feast.

The individual whom he had thus thought proper to avoid, was a short squab person in a sober coloured jerkin and flat cap. Mean looking as to appearance, though rather so from mien and gesture than from any want of freshness in his apparel. He had a plump moon face ; florid, but with that dingy sort of shading which the vulgar call black-a-vize. His visage was too unmeaningly filled out and lineless to attest much character, but, in what it did, there was contained nothing of the more liberal and philanthropic emanations of our nature. On the defection of Farneley, he drew up to the mayor, and availing himself of their similar courses, essayed to raise a conversation, which he opened by a servile reverence.

“ Save your worship,” said he, “ these are plaguy times, and kittle for our fair borough. ’Tis a good saying that there’s always a slack again a bank ; and so we find it a luck’s providing in our troubles that we have a mayor like Master Bulkham to sustain for us.”

“ The which doubtless gives thee great satisfaction,” said De Bulkham, in a manner of cold question. For tho’, as the crafty Richard says, ‘ flattery direct seldom fails,’ yet are there occasions when, the insincerity of the offerer being specially suspected, it not only fails, but becomes offensive.

“ Surely. When the spoiler is abroad I cannot but rejoice to know that the common property is well watched.”

“ And above all thy share of it. Methinks, for this time, it does not incur any crying danger.”

There was an inuendo here meant, but Snifbodle would not see it, and replied upon the overt expression.

“Is not the town threatened with sack, worshipful sir mayor?” he propounded, “and are not our enemies potent and dareful? The Douglas bears a fearsome name, and all tongues tell the strength of his host.”

“Phoo!” interjected De Bulkham, peevishly, “Thou mak’st a mighty coil about the visit of a few misbegotten sawnies, more venturesome than wise. They’ll be rarely lantered ere long. Ecod! if they had not an errand afield, they’ll have one home again! But I wist, friend, thou art thyself of the breed, and likely do’st think thy countrymen marvellous thorough-going wights—invincible belike.—Prithee, wast witness to the barrier-play this afternoon?”

Snifbodle answered in the affirmative.

“Then if thou hadst such a notion, there was physic for’t,” pursued the mayor. “What sent thee to the walls—was’t to refresh thine eyes with the sight o’ St. Andrew’s cross; or to regale thy nose with the scent of brose and bannocks—eh?”

“ I went thither to do my duty as a true man to the borough.—Your worship wrongs me in supposing I can look lovingly on its unfriends, whosoe’er they chance to be.”

Here Snifbodle endeavoured to put on an air of abused honesty.

“ Hem !” expired the mayor, drily, “ If thou hast not a soft blink norlandwise, there’s no truth in common saw. A man has ever a far cast to kith and calf yard, and soon or late he’ll make’t a near one.”

“ I ve thought that afore,” rejoined the other, with an ill-meaning chuckle. “ It crossed my mind e’en now.”

“ Truly, I dare say ’tis never out on’t.”

“ Never—when I’m the same way moved by sight o’ Master Farneley,” returned Snifbodle, grinning spitefully.

“ How mean you, Master Cordiner? how mean you?”

“ Only, that happening then to see a topping merchant, and borough ruler to boot, brought

from the wild dales, I sometimes ponder on the worth o' your worship's saying."

"Have a rein laid on thy tongue, goodman Snifbodle," said the mayor in a severe voice. "The bailiff is a respected burgess and a tried friend to the town, which is more than can be said of all who have feathered their nests in it. What, it griped thee, I suppose, to see his son so tilt and toss your country's knighthood! By my fay! he'll spell his name on more of their knapscaps yet. That youth will one day be as great a credit to the Newcastle, as Hawkwood and Calveley have been to the Londoners."

"The saints guide the bailiff when that day comes!—Though somewhat the lowest of his inches, he carries his head steeple height as it is;—then he'll be past either holding or binding."

"Haply, an' it please thee, good man Cor-diner," reproved De Bulkham, neither pleased with the other's company, nor disposed to tolerate the freedom taken with a brother func-

tionary, "this passes license. And now say what do'st lack at my hands, that thus I have thy company?—To thy business straight."

"Nay, your worship," stammered Snifbodle, rather—as the sailors have it—taken aback, "I do not own any. I use but the gentle fellowship of the high street."

"Soh! that is all. Methought, my dame might have made me thy debtor for a pair of pantoufles, for which thou would'st crave payment! Harkee, sirrah! until thou hast heard that I have ta'en abode in Cordiner's-row, I redd thee no more to elbow me upon the causeway and offer prate of thy betters. A good day, and a fitting mate to thee, my master!"

With these words the worthy magistrate quickened pace and left Snifbodle to his own reflections.

"'Goodman Cordiner!—prate of my betters!'" iterated the latter to himself, in the long drawn emphatic whine, wherewith men emit their bitterness. "As tho' I'd been a penniless knave,

seeking a kindness. A black murrain seize all the betters I have in this land!—may the devil's own secretary have their names in his tablets! By the Lord! the overgrown ox was right!—I *could* wish the bonny Scots were among them tooth and nail, if I did not fear my own pock might suffer i'the stramash: bully Sawnie's not apt to be nice where there's gear to rive.—And yet, I think I could find friends would stand 'tween me and that scathe too. Well! it shall not be long ere I wing away where the little pose I've made will win me both keepsakes and courtesy, here it only gets me a grudge.”

Soliloquizing in this discontented strain, Snifbodle continued his way to his dwelling in Cordiner's-row.

This man, Snifbodle, was, as the reader has already gathered, a Scot. He had resorted in youth to the Newcastle, and pursued with ultimate profit the “gentle craft” of a cordiner, or cordwainer. Exceeding punctuality, a servile assiduity, and surpassing skill in his calling had

procured him a throng of customers, few or none of whom esteemed him as a townsman. Your fashion-mongers being ever of the disposition of my Lord Foppington; who overlooked *his* shoemaker's insolence because he made good shoes. *Ubi bene ibi patria* is a good thrifty maxim, and so a man so selfish as Snifbodle might have inclined to opine, but that his envious and cantankerous character, unfolding itself the more as he grew in substance, gradually increased the general dislike to him, until it at length began to prove a source of reflected annoyance. His thoughts, therefore, now travelled homeward, and he only waited a fitting season to launch his person and gains upon the same road. Far, however, from entertaining any grateful sentiments towards the soil which had produced him his harvest, he would willingly have cast a blight upon it; for, like all bad-hearted people, he regarded as a sort of persecution the cold treatment his own deportment had earned as its just reward.

The slight he had now received, poured additional gall into his breast, and sent him to his fire-side in a frame of mind well suited to meet a demand which was shortly to be made upon his active offices.

CHAPTER V.

I have observed the method of your blood,
And waited on it with concealment
Of a like red and paleness in my own.

FLETCHER.

WHILST the aged De Coupland witnessed the feats of his younger compatriots at the barriers, his daughter and niece remained in bower at the bailiff's. Pensive, thoughtful, and "full of wishes," Amisia mused over her short but vividly stamped acquaintance with Raimond Farneley. She could not—nay, did not attempt—to conceal from herself, that his image roused in her bosom sensations which all she had heretofore seen of gallant cavaliers, had failed to excite. The impression brought with it a degree of internal embarrassment beyond the usual

stock of "pleasing pain" said invariably to accompany her predicament. She had been told, and, hearing oft partly believed, that for a maid of gentle nurture to mingle fortunes with one whose own merits excelled those of his progenitors, was a sort of moral treason, opprobrious to the constitution of society. Certain modern philosophers peruse a man's character in the development of [his cranium; in the feudal age, the same information was sought in the development of his scutcheon and family-tree. Notwithstanding that *his* were blank, Amisia, dreaming of Farneley, could have exclaimed in the words of Olivia to the disguised Viola,

— "thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit,
Do give thee fivefold blazon."

She felt that, whatever the penalty, she could hardly hesitate on an invitation to link her fate with his.

Less soaring in her tastes than Hester, she was far more amiably natural, and quite as sentient. Like all the youthful dames of her

time, she admired the plumed pageantry of arms, and viewed the noble and spirited knight as the legitimate, if not exclusive object of a lady's love; but withal, it was rather on the generosity of soul and graceful courtesy he was supposed to embody, than on anything more arbitrary, that her favour dwelt. These qualities, she had been schooled to believe, were confined to a sphere, and therefore, in that sphere she sought them; but without any matured notion that they were *only* to be found there. Her mental sight was merely limited by obstructions, not like Hester's, diverted from the beginning. Thus unfettered by opinions which would otherwise have crushed her passion for Farneley in the bud, she possessed, underneath, much yielding sweetness of temper, a tenacity and freedom of will, that the *tendre* being confirmed and answered, she would not have flinched from avowal and assertion.

In her cousin she found no sympathy, nor did she indeed venture to seek it; at once aware of

her strong prejudices, and afraid of her sarcastic propensities. Already, the subject had called these into play, but fortunately for Amisia, she was in possession of a certain piece of knowledge which furnished her with counter weapons.

The attached, but unconfiding pair were now together in their appropriated chambers, attended by Mabel Tyzack, who, on the pressure of necessity, had been temporarily raised to the dignity of bower woman.

“Hasten, do, Hester,” said Amisia, (they were about making some alteration in their attire)
“I am all anxious to rejoin our excellent hostess, and to learn tidings from without. Oh! how I do love that kindly-mannered dame. Her open heart seems to overflow with all the charities our Lady can inspire in Christian woman. She has a gift of temper that blesses herself and is blessed by those about her.”

“It is a worthy matron, of a surety,” asserted Hester, “pray Heaven she be not be so good as

to be good for nothing! I verily believe she could not muster will to pluck a fly from a honey-pot."

"Deal not too much in saws, coz. There are many such that jingle patly and have a taking clink, which, in too wide construction, tell to evil purpose. Thine, methinks, bears no wise moral."

"Why, is it not true, wench, that a prompt turn is now and then bespoke at every hand, and does it not oft require a dash of firm, nay stern resolve, to work it out? What use were your stout man-at-arms, if he could not find gall enough to smite the enemy?"

"I may not deny that harsh seeming, and even dealing, is sometimes a thing of need, but it is far more frequently a hot impulse on a false persuasion. The will thereto is ripe, and should rather be headed in with precepts than helped out upon the glib assurance of a superficial adage. But as regards our dame, I am well

content to avow, that e'en thy drawback on her praise, approves her more to my conceit. She hath passing claims to our esteem."

"Ay, indeed. She is fortunate in being mother to a proper son."

This was said in such a manner, that it might appear to Mabel only a casual remark; but it was aptly understood by Amisia to imply an expository commentary on her foregoing eulogies. The same cause which modified its delivery, directed her answer.

"Truly she is," she assented, indifferently, "they have just cause to be proud of each other."

"Say, satisfied, Amise; pride becomes not people of their class," returned Hester. "I can no more fancy it than picture a market gammer's poney caracoling and barded like a war horse."

"Certes thof, ladykins," intruded Mabel, who had all the pert forwardness prescriptive to abigails, heightened by a rustic ignorance of respects. "Had ye seen dame Farneley's son riding, as I saw him this very morn, at the

heels of the great Piercie, ye'd ha' sworn he was as proud as any march-lord o' them a', and, to eyes judging, wi' as good reason. If what they say adown stair be sooth, he'll come home none the humblerwise."

"Prithee peace, gossip," reprimanded Hester. "We want thy handywork, not thy cottage prate."

Mabel sulked aside.

"Nay," interposed Amisia, speaking in undertones to her cousin, "this is scarce called for. Consider she is but the makeshift of a day, it skills not to square observances so nicely. Tell me, wench (to Mabel) what hast thou heard of the esquire, and our other brave defenders? we may well take concern to know."

Thus encouraged, Mabel entered on a string of details too preposterously exaggerated, as well as too incoherent, for our repetition.

"And they e'en say," she concluded, "the wudspur Piercie and young Maister Rawmond held the hail tote o' the bonny Scots at spears

length for the best part o' twa hours. But, under favour, I'll no believe that mysel; I ken my kintra'men the better."

"What say'st thou, Hester," said Amisia, laughing. "Dost thou think there be *no* Scottish knight able to match these Paladians?"

"Hotspur is a redoubted lance," replied Hester, dissembling in turn, "but as for the borough-bred springald, I should imagine there are pages in the hostile array, men enough for his mark."

"Methinks thou might'st find fairer phrase whereby to designate one who rescued us from captivity," rejoined Amisia, a little provoked. "But, peradventure, thou wert not altogether averse to a journey into Scotland, and deemed it rather a left-handed piece of service."

Hester had privy reasons for feeling this taunt keenly. It stung her the more, that it went to impugn her affection for her native land, to which, whatever her secret consciousness, she was attached with constitutional ardency. Tho'

she declined to take the matter up in a direct way, she was not of a disposition to hear patiently ; and, in consequence, sought to harass in flank the enemy she did not choose to offer battle in front.

“ Now, as I am a gentlewoman !” she exclaimed, “ there lacks but the recollection of that same mighty piece of service to confirm my opinion. How did the youth achieve our deliverance ? was it like a sworn votary of arms, by wightly open deed ?—No.—It was by a truck, a scurvy bargain ; unworthy an honourable cavalier’s connivance. Yet am I not thence ungrateful, the man befriended us after the fashion of his blood and nurture. Pardon me, if this offends thee, Amise ; I pronounce in freedom.”

“ Tut, wench !” rejoined Amisia, recovering her self-possession, and prudently disposed to waive the implication thrown out in the concluding turn of personal apology. “ If thou opinest wrongfully of the youth, the blame be on thine

own discernment. I suffer no offence ; nor am compelled to call thee to account. Meanwhile, (giving Hester a cautionary look) we ramble in our talk."

"Sure to Heaven," she immediately resumed, "my dear father would not plant himself near this contention, save as a secure spectator!"

"His brave temper will incline him to mingle right hotly, I dare swear," said Hester, constrainedly taking up the topic—"but, questionless, there are considerate knights who must feel bound to rule his wilfulness. The Percies, and he of Raby, are pledges for his safety."

"In them I trust ; and as we hear of no general fight, may thence feel easy. Mabel, hast ought more to tell of valourous doing."

Mabel had, however, exhausted her budget ; originally filled only from the stores collected by the bailiff's domestics ; the substance whereof chiefly concerned the carriage and exploits of their master's heir. In this default, she took occasion to inform the ladies touching what had

already transpired in the household, namely, Master Farneley's festal meditations.

"Aye, indeed, wench!" exclaimed Amisia, woman enough to welcome the idea of a *fete*—"revels to-night! Why, thou art but a limping witted bower-woman! Had'st understood thy craft, this news had been the first fitte of thy ditty. Dost hear, sweetheart? (to Hester). We must be braver in our busking."

"All's on wheels below, preparing for't," pursued Mabel, "the town's waits are bespoke, fresh rushes are spreading, and his worship is gone forth to bid the gentles, as they drop back, to lodgement. Oh, judekins! that I had been a ladykin! to trip it roundly 'mong the lave, wi' a comely squire for my bachelor!"

"Ah, those comely esquires!" muttered Hester, "they run full sore in maidens' heads."

"Why, pyet, thou hast a husband, I wot," reproved Amisia, speaking only to conceal her appliance of the preceding remark, "thou should'st have learned to forget such wishes."

Mabel blushed and looked down, as if aware that her conjugal bargain was not to be boasted of, and, moreover, conscious that the nuptial tie had not effectually knotted up her wandering fancy.

Hester, at all times of a mood disinclined to unbend with inferiors, and whose mind did not readily expel unpleasant impressions, here betook herself to the lattice, until it pleased Amisia to dismiss their attendant.

When this took place, each, for some time, avoided the regard of the other, and maintained that awkward silence which usually subsists betwixt two persons left *tête-à-tête* under the mutual consciousness of a *désagrémens*: both oppressed with a sense that something ought to be said, yet neither willing to commence saying it. Gratefully, therefore, fell upon their ears a gentle tap at the door, announcing some one to request admission. The alacrity wherewith they flew to open it, and the strenuous cordiality with which they received the visiter, who proved to be Dame

Farneley, must have been extremely flattering to her, under the readiest construction.

“ Dear hearts,” she exclaimed, surveying admiringly the persons of the two girls, and mostly that of Amisia, “ I came to forewarn ye of meeting gay gallants anon ; but, of a truth, I see it were the meeter deed to wend to them with word of caution. They must shield their hearts. St. Bridget ! what havoc there will be there ! ”

“ Spare thee that fear, kind mother,” rejoined Amisia playfully, hurrying the dame to a seat, “ most of these cavaliers have breasts as impenetrable as though they bore natural corslets within their iron ones.”

“ But their eyes, rose-blossom—their eyes. They will hardly come blindfold.”

“ They might as well,” maintained Amisia, “ for these will be so strained back upon their past chevisaunces, that we poor maidens may spread our lures equally in vain. Martial gests, done and to be done, will for the present shut out all

other thoughts. But do repose sweet mother, you look heated."

"Nay, burd, I must not sit," said the dame, gently resisting the smiling coercion used to her, "God wot I have too much to do, and too little time to do't. Were I to stay looking on thy sweet face, I would forget all, as I'm e'en now like to slip my errand; which was to tell thee that Sir John is below, and craves to have thee near him."

"Thanks be to our Holy Mother for his safety—I will be with him straight. Prithee, are all our brave friends alike fortunate?"

"Most, I believe. Some knights have been scathed, but none, as I heard Sir John to say, of name, and few to extremity."

Amisia would gladly have pressed a more particular inquiry—have gratulated the dame upon the reported prowess of her son, but she felt a strange reluctance to encounter the mother's shrewd discernment.

Hester, however, had no such scruples, and,

therefore, partly from an obvious motive of complaisance, and partly to enjoy a mischievous play with her cousin's countenance, led the matron to the subject. It need scarcely be told how warmly and volubly it was taken up. Of the facts elicited, it is not necessary to declare, more than that, though Raimond had not performed the miraculous feats announced by Mabel, he had certainly thickened his laurels.

The dame, at length, recollected her postponed avocations, and stopped short:—"Sad's me," she exclaimed, "I'm gossiping here—as well I could the longer!—and, meanwhile, all else is standing still. If it please ye, ladies, to attend Sir John, allow me to usher ye the way."

Following their hostess, they descended to a small matted parlour, where they found the old banneret seated, together with his disfunctioned esquire Mouboucher. The latter waiting behind his master's chair, whilst he made such a prolonged assault upon a substantial array of viands, as proved, that though he had lost some

readiness in mastication, he lacked not perseverance. Their bacinets and plate-coats (for they had doughtily equipped themselves from the castle armory) lay piled in a corner.

“Ha, wenches!” cried Sir John, “come kiss me, and shew how glad ye are to see the old knight doff his harness. By the cross of Neville!” he added, *sotto voce*, “that I wore must ha’ been made for him of Gath, that the gossellers talk of, for it’s past my bearing! I never found the like before. Come, buss me, peats!”

“We’re right to behold our father cheery and unharmed, he may be full sure,” said Hester, “but as for the kiss, methinks it had best be deferred, until he hath done saluting that boar’s haunch.”

“A fair plea, but not a lasting,” laughed Sir John, dismissing his platter. “I have just finished as hearty a meal as ever made hungry jackman after a twelve-hour’s ride—so now to wind it up.”

He accordingly rose, and roughly but affec-

tionately embraced both ladies. At the self-same moment the elder and younger Farneley, together, entered.

What lover can behold his mistress in the arms of another man, even though it be her father, without having the ecstasy of holding her in his own, suggested to him ; and if that be a delight, he never did, nor may reasonably hope, to enjoy, how much more intense will be the feeling ? Raimond experienced it in all its intensity.

“ Save thee, worthy host !” cried De Coup-land, perceiving the last comer. “ We owe thee grace for a king’s refection. And to you, fair sir,” turning to Raimond, “ I owe an old warrior’s thanks for stoutly upholding his country’s fame in field. I am also thy debtor upon an older score, but of that hereafter.”

Raimond was about to answer the above in the ancient and ever-during strain of “ bounden duty,” and so forth, when the knight cut the effusion short.

“ Stay, stay !” he cried, “ you younglings rate but cheap an old man’s praises. Thou shalt have more valued tribute. Here, wenches !” taking the esquire’s hand and presenting him to the ladies, “ the boy merits your favour.—Speak it to him in maiden fashion. Your cheek, Amise—your cheek moppet !”

As the speech dictated and the custom of the time allowed, the young man brushed with tremulous lips the warm dimples of his short-breathing idol. He next, more composedly, repeated the ceremony with Hester.

But Raimond had in the above incident more than a momentary source of intoxication. For, as in modern high-life, the gentleman who has been formally introduced to a lady, approaches her on terms of new-born ease and equality, so did he, through this authorized passage of courtesy, conceive himself accorded honourable acknowledgment by the house of Coupland. In proportion as the exaggerated colouring where-

with he had before overlaid his unreal disadvantages were depressed, this softening of the deeper hues was uplifted. He did not, indeed, persuade himself that the hand of Amisia was placed any nearer the reach of his aspirations, knowing the lofty views entertained for her, and the ease with which they could be realized ; but his spirit was emancipated—he felt no longer tongue-tied—his energies shook off their paralysis ; he had gained approach at least to speak his passion, should fortune send invitation.

On the actuations of De Coupland a word or two is necessary. He had originally considered himself bound in gratitude to Raimond for the affair of his late rescue, but still he thought of him only as a well-deserving churl, whom he could at his convenience repay with gifts : now, however, that he had beheld him playing his part amongst the chivalry of the period—lauded and honoured by one whom he believed, and Holinshead has recorded, to be “the pattern of

all virtue and martial prowess," he saw him in a totally different light. Excellence in arms was, with the banneret, the first of human attributes, and he estimated the esquire commensurately. Not, by-the-by, that he forgot his defective origin, or would have endured, even the supposition, of the youth's raising his eyes to his daughter. Such an idea never crossed him ; being further banished by the existence of long-harboured persuasions, which a dull perception prevented him from observing were not quite so valid as he fondly believed.

With the haughty Hester, too, our esquire rose considerably. Making due mutation of circumstances, she may be said now to have received him as a fashionable Miss would a previously slighted beau, after having ascertained that said beau had been publicly seen in the opera-box of some *titled* demirep.

The little coterie ripening in acquaintance, a broken and familiar conversation arose. Sir

John edified his attentive host by the recital of many extraordinary deeds of bygone valour; all pointed with an eternal *ego*. The bailiff listened and thought his ear enriched. To be able to say hereafter, that the famous knight of Coupland had, with his own lips, told him such and such adventures, was to him a privilege of no mean value.

It is the solace—the right of age to live over the past, and when the present is to it a dreary blank, who can be hardhearted enough to begrudge the prescription. Such garrulity is too peevishly regarded. It must be painful enough to every man, to feel that he can no longer act his part in the bustle of life, and therefore cruel to deny him the benefit of that he *has* played. Besides, the *bis puer* assumption is unjust and indiscriminate; for, as we have it from Cicero, “*Senilis stultitiæ quæ deliratio appellari solet, serum levium est, non omnium.*” Example is far beyond precept, but truth requires it to be con-

fessed, that upon this occasion, the fair Amisia and the younger Farneley must be accused of eschewing the scatterings of venerable experience. If a matter of fact jury condemn, the indulgent judge knowing them to lie under another, though a 'soft impeachment,' will extend them a mitigation of penalty.

CHAPTER VI.

My project may deceive me,
But my intents are fixed, and will not leave me.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE unaccountable tastes and predilections of woman, might form the thesis of curious and lengthened speculations. Daily we detect beauty devoted to ugliness, vivacity to sober quietism, and intellect to fatuity. And what, though the most frequent sight is not the least puzzling, how common is it to see the gentlest females clinging fondly to the most rough and hirsute of the opposite sex. There exists a coarse and disgraceful saying amongst the lower orders, in

effect, that a woman resembles a spaniel, and for reasons to which gallantry forbids direct allusion. This is odious, both in import and expression ; but, like other dogmas of unsophisticated nature, may inwrap the crude germ of a truth, susceptible of less objectionable development. Be that as it may, there is not absent (of course confining the remark to the class in which this notion originates) something that seems to countenance it. If experience be recurred to, not a few will recollect instances wherein the wandering vagrant, or drunken brawler, who like Jobson, ‘ three times a day hoops the barrel’ of his callet, has been noted to enjoy a warmer regard than many a placid and indulgent husband. Stronger illustrations might be supplied, but it is preferable to leave them to the reminiscences of the observant. In venturing a surmise whence it may arise that

“ Cum canibus timidi venient ad pocula damæ ;”

are we, without standing committed to so unamiable a doctrine, to conjecture it possible that

women, by nature timid and yielding, may look upon a certain savour of ferocity as a contrasting attribute, distinctive of manhood ; and, thence, give it toleration ; or shall we—and gladly—rest satisfied with a belief that the anomaly adverted to, in common with other disparities, springs solely from the wicked and indiscriminate archery of Dan Cupid ? The latter is, at any rate, much the more desirable impression.

The above reflections are induced by the duty that hereabout becomes incumbent, of bringing before the reader the circumstances of an attachment—infatuation would be more in propriety—conceived by Hester Arnecliffe towards the violent and repelling Earl of Moray.

Some months previously to the time being, the Earl of March and Dunbar, a scheming and restless noble, who, by some means we have not been able to discover, had influence in England, procured letters of safeconduct, authorizing a sojourn within the realm for a limited period. What were his immediate purposes it is

not material to inquire; suffice it to say that his brother, John of Moray, accompanied him. During their stay, they had claimed and experienced the hospitality of Lord de Neville; though, in justice to that potent peer, it is proper to say, without his participating in any privy designs they might have in contemplation. This fell out pending the recent visit of Amisia and Hester to the Lady Neville, and thus Moray and the lastnamed demoiselle came in contact.

Amidst the revelry that ran through the princely halls of Raby, Moray, struck by the superb person of Hester, watched opportunity to solicit, and found power to sway her affections. The quick love he imbibed was purely sensual; but not, therefore, falling on a spirit so inflammatory, the less active and scorching. She, whose passion for exalted station so far outran the promise of her subordinate fortunes, was probably at first gained by his rank, but, certainly in the end, became enamoured,—com-

manded as it were, by the flashings of his bold temperament. Her *beau idéal* of man pictured him as a towering majestic creature; and was quite incomprehensive of the sterling essentials which best support the 'wear and tear' of intercourse. She did not reflect that, albeit dignity and rule are fine things in camp or council, they trip not 'nimble in my lady's chamber.' The threatening carriage which repels danger is doubtless useful in its hour, but happily such hours are few, and dwindle to a speck of time, compared with those to be spent in social relations. Young ladies, however, are not proverbial for prospective reasoning, and we fear frequently act upon the same impulse as the village maiden who declares, that she 'will please her eye if she plague her heart.' Yet, strongly influenced as Hester was by the habitual colour of her fancy, she was not altogether unmoved by a more natural, if less describable, attraction.

The mutual interchanges of our lovers were throughout conducted with privacy. On Moray's part, from covert motives; on Hester's, from her lacking the approval and confidence of her cousin. To Amisia, the Scottish earl appeared what he really was, a domineering savage-souled chieftain; rendered still more obnoxious as belonging to an unfriendly nation. She disliked him accordingly, and rated her companion somewhat roundly on the few slight symptoms of partiality that unavoidably suffered detection. Perhaps she did so the more freely from being ignorant of the deeper root the matter had taken.

How far the *affaire* might have proceeded is uncertain, it being abruptly brought to a stop by the arrival of Sir John de Coupland. The old knight, prejudiced against all Scots, and particularly against the two Dunbars, found speedy occasion to quarrel with both, using such unmeasured terms of expression, as sunk

poignantly into the vindictive breast of the younger. The parties separated; Sir John, of course taking with him his daughter and niece, hastily withdrew from Raby.

In this posture matters continued until the surprisal of Corsinside. Midst the confusion which followed that event, Moray found favouring facility to snatch a brief interview with Hester, unknown to her relatives. He then assured her of his unabated love—urged her rather to seek, than avoid accompanying her uncle on his impending journey to Scotland; and threw out vague professions of intent on meeting her there. After this, he pursued the raid whereon he was bound, greatly felicitating himself on the chance thus opened to his designs.

Accustomed to indulge much less reasonable desires without caring for worldly opinion, his passion for Hester was sufficiently strong to have induced him, in spite of mere impolicy, to espouse her; but other suggestions intervened.

He hated De Coupland to whom she was allied, and now, moreover, believing her in a fair way to be cast into his hands in his own country, he conceived schemes of an unprincipled nature. These he continued to brood over with pleasure, until the sight of the old banneret at the barriers of the Newcastle, apprized him of the fact which overturned all. As most men begrudge the purchase price of a thing once obtained, and would willingly double the same whilst it remains unattainable ; so did he return to his will to secure Hester, almost at any sacrifice.

At an early stage of the evening that followed the taking ground before the Newcastle, Moray and his brother sat communing in their common tent.

“ Every man buckles his belt in his own fashion ! as our country proverb says,” observed the latter : “ but if the Douglas thinks he will do any good by getting up a tournament before these gates, to entertain the peak-goose

burghers on the walls, he is deceived. That wild cat Percy wishes no better than to see us so befooled ourselves, until he hath gathered spring to pounce upon us."

"Methinks thou art marvellously afraid of that same wild cat," returned Moray, sneeringly. "Now by the shored cross! I thank the Douglas, that he waits to lure him out; for I would fain try to clip his claws. As to the townsmen, it can give them but sorry pleasure to behold their country's best lances shamed, and flung o'er crupper."

"They saw not much of that to-day," rejoined Dunbar, drily, "why an my eyes served truly, thou thyself wert lustily shocked by yon rush of an esquire with the Percy cognizance."

"Foh!" exclaimed Moray, reddening, "I moved not in my seat. 'Twas that cursed fellow Ormiston had armed me with a dry splitting reed 'stead of a lance. It snapped, or ere I had borne down my man."—

"I thought you shifted—but 'tis no matter.

“ Douglas intends to assault the town to-morrow,” he resumed, speaking in the manner of one who rather invites remark than expects to give information.

“ Ay, if he cannot draw on a general battle without.”

“ He will succeed in neither object. The first fails, if the defenders are stout ; the second, if they are wise. After all, another day is spent, and our enemies reinforced—what may result ?”

“ Why, that they’ll gain hearts to seek us in open field, and we’ll gain the *gloire* of vanquishing them there. I trow ’twas for such a ploy we crossed the border.”

“ Mazy-brained hotheads, like thyself, John, might have such simple views, but the like had not I. Harkee ! I’ve dreamt of a plan by which we may make this rich town ours—revenge our house’s wrong at Roxburgh, on the fame of Percy, and that without being beggared of the

honour through the encroaching claims of Douglas."

"Ay, indeed!" said Moray, rousing himself into an attitude of expectancy, "that were a thing worth laying ear to! But you dreamt it, you say, brother; belike you are dreaming yet."

"Go to—listen. Whilst we were last in this quarter, and when thou wert playing the part of a wolf love-stricken by a lambkin—"

"Hold, I pray," interrupted Moray, angrily, "if the rest to come chime with the preamble, I wish to hear no more."

"Patience—I will leap forward, and only say, in brief, that during that time, I did not forget old Scotland's interests."—

"Or, rather—thine own."

"Well! I take not that amiss—but for the nonce, both are connected. Behind yonder walls abide many of our broken countrymen; besides a swarm of dalesmen and other scum, to whom all countries are alike. Now these, I

have reason to believe, would, for the promise of future asylum, and the chance of rifling the coffers of their wealthy taskmasters, be easily prevailed on to master one of the ports, and admit us under the cover of night into the town. Our own vassals, of course, being prepared to take the lead, we then engross the first swoop on a glorious prize."

"Not so fast! That there are plenty of such willing hands, I nothing question; but how may they be dealt with?—how collected and bound to the adventure?"

"Take me with you!—that has been thought of, else I were a poor plotter: therein comes to account the forecast whereof I just now boasted. Amongst these burghers lives one Halbert Snifbodle, formerly a sutor in Selkirk, but at present flourishing here as a topping cordiner. With this man I have already had sounding communication, and know, that for the pledge of some petty function on my domains, I can command him as a submissive tool. He is peculiarly fitted to

our purpose, as being acquainted with, and resorted to, by those landrakers whose handy offices we want: through him they can be mustered, and instructed to our wishes."

"So far, so good!—but will the warden's men-at-arms be so complaisant as to allow an embassy to pass 'twixt us and this convenient person. Spot and hour—nay minute, must be nicely concerted. Precision is the soul of such emprises."

"I wot not, John, what change thou hast perceived in me of late," said Dunbar, with a start of peevishness, "what trippings of my wit, that thus once and again you check me with a needless schooling—unwonted too, in thee. Trust me, I have not mounted an unbridled horse! Thou art aware our force here, though of a quality sufficiently capable of coping with the warden's power—burghers and all, in regular onslaught, is yet unequal to the beleaguerment of so wide a circle of fortification. We have therefore not made the attempt. This, the

besieged have seen, and, consequently, excepting on the side we actually threaten, no very vigilant watch is maintained. The more distant ports, I learn, are kept cautiously open to allow ingress to the armed vassals straggling in from the alarmed country. Now, though the jackman of the march may, as is probable, hold an adjoining guard, it is the custom of the place to commit the immediate wardership of these to burghers. What is further lucky, though scarcely, as you will anon see, important, one of the furthestmost and least regarded gates, is in the charge of a man whose name and price I am possessed with. My idea then is, to despatch thither an emissary or two, equipped as English men-at-arms; who, furnished with such further direction as I can give, may, with or without even the furtherance of this warder, easily pass into the town as friendly comers. The twilight, the guise, and the apparent futility of subjecting to nice examination isolated individuals, who from circumstances must necessarily be ad-

mitted hastily, and who will be gladly hailed in the light of recruits, render entry, at least, quite practicable." Continuing, he pursued the subject further into detail than it is expedient to follow him. It need only be observed, that the intimate acquaintance the border warriors had with names, localities, and other minutiae connected with the customs, persons, and country of each other; their similarity of manners and language enabled him to arrange this attempt in a way, that, with a different sort of enemy, would have been much less feasible.

"Well, brother," said he, after concluding, "what say'st thou to my complot?"

"It bears a face," answered the other, through whose mind some moving thought seemed to flit. "It certes has plausibility."

"Oh! ample."

"Hast fixed on a fitting emissary? 'Tis a service of some venture, and then your dubbed knight stumbles at any charge but that he makes in full career."

“ Ay, so our chivalry would have the world and each other believe ; but I have never found that the gilt spur on the man’s heel indisposed the wearer’s head to any act, whatsoever, that his interest recommended and his ability could effect. Canst thou not direct my mind to an emprisor ? ”

“ I can,” replied Moray, drawing up his form, and looking at his brother with an air of action. “ One that will meet all hazards, and moreover, signally secure to our name the full credit of the exploit.”

“ Excellent ! The Douglas has long had an overshare of sway upon the border ; our compeers shall see how far it is due. Let us but accomplish this undertaking, and ’twill not only fill our coffers—low enough, God wot !—with English marks, but also make ourselves of mark at home—the thought on’t makes me jocular.”

“ And what gives me most pleasure, we humble the proud Northumberland,” said Moray, striking his sheathed brand upon the ground, as

if to give vent to his ireful recollections. "I've groaned to be so long debtor to him and his brood."

"Come, we must hunt the game down ere we sound a moot. How call you the hardy venturer who will serve our turn so well?"

"His name is as familiar as your own. I myself am he."

"Thou!" exclaimed Dunbar, much astounded, "are you in earnest?"

"In earnest, and determined."

"Nay," objected the other, "this is being too forward. Some landless 'squire, willing to wage his neck against a purse of gold, or the chance of crossing his shoulder with a knight's baldrick, were best to face the peril."

"Dissuade me not brother," said Moray, decisively, "I have resolved, on reasons. Recite to me the avizements that still are lacking; the spell that is to charm yon trusty porter, should there be call to use it—the key to this Snifbodle's den, and so forth. Swith, 'tis time of doing."

“Thou wert ever headstrong, John; but in this I begin to smack a double folly. Thou art—”

“Hold, George!” interposed Moray, “thou know’st I never could bear to have my motives sifted, or my acts controlled; nor will I now.”

“I have done, tho’ I perceive my conjecture shrewd,” said Dunbar, waving further opposition. “I’ faith! my hopes are too highly built upon the achievement, to baulk thy firm intent. I have no greater fears for thee than those thy superfluous rashness doth engender.”

The unuttered suspicions of Dunbar were justly founded. Moray, albeit constitutionally disposed enough to adventures offering a marked shew of audacity, was stimulated to this in agitation by an impulse more lively than that ostensible. Hester, he took for granted, was in the town, and her he had resolved to see, whatever might be the consequence. Beyond the customary craving of a Leander after the society of his Hero, it is difficult to predicate by

what definite views he was animated; though some vague ones he had. Perhaps his chief anticipation was the proud pleasure of convincing his goddess how entirely he despised danger at all times, and especially where she was concerned. As his character was one in which a great deal of bravado mingled with much real hardihood, this desire was likely to carry him considerably further than in another would seem probable.

After the two barons had duly methodized and digested their plans, Moray summoned his henchman Ormiston (who had rejoined him after his flight from the onfall of the Tynedale pricklers), and issued his orders for instant operation. Him, he intended to make his companion and minor adjutator.

In this age and clime, when there was seldom any other distinction between hostile soldiers, but the cognizance they exhibited, little more was necessary than to change that in order to effect a metamorphosis. When, therefore, the

pair of Scots had assumed the red cross of St. George, scarce aught else was wanting to enable them successfully to pass for English spears. They were, besides, provided with knowledge which prepared them to answer readily any cursory interrogatories. They could name their lord, his domain and the like matters; and even fix those so advisedly as to anticipate any untoward contact. Once fairly within the walls, and mixed up with the herd of irregular military, hastily congregated from diverse quarters, and subject to no general laws of billet and roll-call, the risk of detection was diminished to a bare possibility. It then only remained to make use of their instrument, Snifbodle, and endeavour to bring their ulterior project into play.

Without loss of time the two adventurers rode forth, and, taking an extensive circuit, approached the town upon its eastern and most remote face. How they fared will hereafter appear.

CHAPTER VII.

“ ———Genus et proavos et quæ non fecimus ipsi
Vix ea nostra voco.”

Uncongenial as were, in many respects, the minds of De Coupland's daughter and niece, the one drawing delight from natural images—the other, bent on the contemplation of shadows merely because gigantic in outline, there was yet a similar ardency in their views of these. Though the same desires might not actuate, nor the same objects inspire—though their susceptibilities were diverse, both were capable of an intense feeling in their behalf. Equally high-

toned and unselfish in spirit, and long associated, they had a firm reliance upon one another; which, if it did not compensate for the absence of sympathy, preserved their attachment always entire.

The casual withdrawal of the male portion of the little circle wherein we last saw them, leaving them alone together, a recurrence to their chamber colloquy proved unavoidable. Each endeavoured in some degree to gloze over the insinuations then let fall; but indeed, as mostly happens in such cases, by something like a return to the offensive strain.

“I confess,” observed Hester, in continuation, “that your youth has a courteous carriage, which might well beseem a cavalier of gentler nurture: report, too, voices him as a wight in exercises; but—but—” she hesitated, as people often do who find they have incautiously commenced a speech leading to a stronger conclusion than they premeditated.

“But what?” demanded Amisia, led by a

wish to appear untouched, to draw on an issue she guessed at, and would infinitely rather have avoided.

Hester still paused, delicacy evidently struggling with a disposition too much inclined to unqualified declarations.

“One would imagine ’twas dame Farneley you believed yourself addressing,” resumed Amisia, maiden pride compelling her to invite the explanation she did not wish to hear, “that has you deem it prudent to withhold your drawback on her son’s good qualities. Surely, to me, the subject needs no mincing.”

“Amise,” said Hester, obeying the spur of her temperament to meet bluntly the sort of challenge thrown down to her, “you are my sister—in affection, at least, I may not—must not—sit by in silence, and see you play a part so fraught with consequences. You love this young esquire—have told him that you love him.”

“Hold, there,” interrupted Amisia, indignant, even in glowing confusion. “Bold enough the

first assumption; the last, insulting and intolerable. I may not stay to listen further."

"Nay, hear me out," rejoined Hester, detaining her friend in an attempt to rise. "I mean not to advance that in words, or perhaps in will, you have conveyed to him that knowledge; but the gallant is not blind. Love, they say, is so; but not to its own food. He hath the vanity of personage, and thou hast given him evidences might have awakened it, had he it not. Do not thine eyes, ears, and that more subtle sense which, though it lack outward organ, is even more intelligent, assure thee of his bold passion, and think'st thou he is not correspondently gifted? Believe me, his discerning's apt, and thy unmeant disclosures manifold."

During the delivery of the above, Amisia recomposed herself. Left to the guidance of her own heart, she had a stock of moral courage peculiarly available against imputations which

involved only what did not, to her sounder sense, appear intrinsically culpable. By the aid and application of this, she rallied. Still, anxious to avert any further analysis of her feelings, whilst she, in part, met her friend's attack openly, she contrived to divert its brunt by a counter-hit.

“Marry, now!” said she, affecting a smile, “granting that a gentle maiden should shew some signs of favour to a proper young esquire, where is the mighty mischief with which it is, as you say, fraught? or, reverse the case, and suppose a belted earl devoted, all in honour, to a humbler mistress,—where, again, the harm? God wot! such things have ever been, and may.”

Hester caught the point, as indeed she could not fail, blushing up to the eyes, which burned with double brilliancy. She was startled; but not painfully. The sally, in one of its bearings, raised an ideality not unpleasant to her fancy.

“ You are jocular, Amise,” she returned, quietly, “ ’tis well. What I have ventured to touch on, will, I hope, never appear to you worth graver notice. To meet the spirit of your jest, however, I have freedom to declare, that where supposed parties are both fairly graced in birth, I do not take high account of other disparities, the mere accident of circumstances.”

“ Why, what is the first but an accident at outset?” interposed a strange voice, which proved to be that of Father Noel, who had entered unobserved; “ a little further removed, but still an accident.”

The ladies were, of course, much disconcerted, not being exactly aware how much of the foregoing conversation might have been overheard. Some symptoms of their embarrassment were visible. Of these the friar took no sensible notice, but after bestowing on them the sacerdotal benediction, reposed himself sedately on an opposite settle. He was now vested in the strict costume of his order, and had a much

more priestly appearance than he had formerly exhibited.

“ Ye spake, daughters,” said he, after regarding them silently a few moments, “ of the separation which the habitudes of society have established between its various classes. ’Tis a matter I would willingly discuss with ye. May I crave your opinions thereupon ?”

“ Nay, holy father,” answered Amisia, “ we will, the rather, listen to thee, and learn what opinions it is befitting we should hold.”

“ Oh ! questionless, the reverend clerk will tell us all men are alike in the eye of their Great Maker,” observed Hester, anticipatively. “ ’Tis his function so to teach us, and our duty so to believe. But our point is, how stand they in the eyes of each other ?—and, what interests us most—how stand their claims for honour and lady-love ? I am sure he will not on that, gag even the base-bred varlet, whose dreams are all on beef and ale—whose triumph is o’er a stricken cock, at Shrovetide, with the brave and cour-

teous knight, whose thirst is for glory, and whose sport is the defence of kingdoms. Neither will he uphold the sordid, however wealthy, son of traffic, whose soul is in his pelf, against the generous gentleman, who thinks of money only to diffuse it. There are distinctions—marked by sign; for I fancy I will be held to that:—are they not, father?”

“Ay, ay, daughter,” replied the friar, “you cleave your way rarely upon the wings of attributes. To follow you by the letter is to agree with you. While we dress our own puppets, we may dispose the frieze and the tissue as arbitrarily as we please. How if your cavalier be neither brave, nor generous, nor courteous?”

“Why then he disgraces his lineage and forfeits his honours.”

“Still he retains your talisman, but let that pass. How if the peasant possess all these qualities?”

“Then would I reward and trust him.”

“ And marry him, did the current run so ? ”

“ It could not—should not. I would divert or arrest its course.”

Hester spoke emphatically, giving an involuntary glance to Amisia, which she received as meant in admonition. Spalding also perceived and put on it a sagacious construction. He had not witnessed the incidents of the last day or two, without making his own observations. Perchance partially instigated by them, he thought proper to repeat his query to the latter lady.

“ I think,” answered she, timidly, but frankly, “ that where I witnessed sterling desert, and found it in such exterior guise as a demoiselle can acknowledge, I would not quarrel with its lowly origin.”

“ Well and wisely answered,” commended Noel.

“ Not so ! ” objected Hester. “ The taint is irremoveable. The falcon is a brave bird and may take a lofty flight, but it can neither breed eagles nor soar so high.”

“When we hear that the human race is divided, as into eagles, falcons, or crows, it will be time to think of a reply,” rejoined the friar, with undisguised contempt.

“Judge me not too quickly, sir friar,” said Hester. “I am not here quite the superficial talker you opine—not altogether the child that admires barely the glitter of a rich jewel, without conviction of its value. As the nurtured flower ever excels in beauty the wild product of the common, so does the child of honour excel the boor. The mind that is formed on the contemplation of base and lowly things must, perforce, be grovelling. To know vile usages, is, to a certain extent, to be polluted. With the gentle, bred apart from mean pursuits, schooled in humanities, and elevated in soul by high excitements, the position is reversed. The heart-stirring clash of arms—the dignity of council—and the society of courtly dames, cannot fail to be more ennobling than the clink of pence, or the hissing of a roasted crab in an ale-pot.”

“ Fair daughter,” said Spalding, “ if, as thou hast admitted, all the excellencies so liberally ascribed to the high-born, are incidental and not inherent: if thou art content—and I praise thee for the reservation—to venerate rank only in its presumed concomitants, what extraordinary homage should you—should we all pay to those who flourish without its aids?—who, like growing oaks, force their way through the tangle which erst fenced round their roots, and rise into towering trees: who, unhelped by circumstances, opposed by prejudice, shine forth in possession of the greatest endowments which mortal man, prince or peer though he be, is capable of exhibiting. These, I say, are nobility; let custom confer the title wheresoever else it may.”

“ I would go with you the more readily, father,” interrupted Hester “ had it been my good fortune to have met any such marked examples.”

“ Many have lived, my child, but the annals

of the world have not been opened to thee, and you know it not. Many do live, but thy experience is confined to narrow limits; beyond, you see nothing, and within, only through a coloured medium. A time will come, when, if not more rife, they will be more considered."

Much more the worthy friar, always in his element when '*debellare superbos*' was his text, added to the above; but to recite the disquisition might fatigue our fair readers. After demolishing several branches of the straw-framed machinery

"Which knaves invent and fools admire,"

he concluded with a remark which, though made in perfect sincerity, was intended to tell to secret purpose.

"You, daughter," said he, addressing Hester, "require examples of accomplished demeanour in those you are pleased to denounce as churls; I have one at hand, a stripling—I will not say without name, for he has already wrested one from Fortune, but avowedly without pedigree;

who, imbodyes gifts which could not have been enhanced had his infancy been swathed in purple. In fifty years intercourse with mankind—ay, baron, knight, squire, or page, I have met few whom he need envy. And, if you will only estimate the marble by its external polish, still I challenge your censure; for he is modest, well graced, and even courtly. This is the son of our host.”

There was one present drank in this high eulogium upon Raimond Farneley with a greedy ear. It was couched precisely in the terms most palatable to a maiden's taste, and thence more valued. The pleasure it gave her was betrayed both to Hester and the friar by the uncontrollable play of muscle around her mouth—a feature, by-the-by, desperately refractory under concealed satisfaction.

Spalding, as we before hinted, had not urged the conversation into the above channel without a secondary motive. His shrewd perceptions had enabled him to guess the reciprocal emotions

of Amisia and the esquire, and his peculiar turn of character led him to enjoy their growth, and wish to foster it. He had, moreover, taken a strong liking to the latter, whose amiable port pleased him, and whose repressed aspirations attracted his sympathy. He pitied, indeed, the bent of his ambition, and contemned the folly which pined after the companionship of disdainful fools. "After all," he reflected, "it is not he, but a senseless world, is to blame. It conspires against itself to centre all reputation in baubles, and who would strive for that, must bow to them."

The trio was shortly disturbed by the intervention of arrangements for the evening's festivity.

These were pushed to the greatest extent the limited "appliances" of a simple citizen's mansion, and the hurry of the occasion, would allow. Master Miles Farneley, like most men who have risen to wealth from low beginnings by the pursuit of that commerce which the lofty Roman

“damns, with the faint praise” of being “non admodum vituperanda,” was a little ostentatious in its exhibition. . To his credit, however, be it said, he was not induced to such displays by the contemptible spirit which loves to provoke the envy of the less fortunate; but rather by a wish to purchase liberally their golden opinions. So well had he succeeded, that the prejudices with which he had originally to contend, as a stranger coming out of a dreaded district, were overcome and extinguished.

CHAPTER VIII.

I'll play him ; gain a knight, or a good squire ;
Or a gentleman of any other county in the kingdom.

TALE OF A TUB.

RAIMOND FARNELEY, as Hester Arnecliffe had thought proper to say of him, was not altogether blind to the symptoms of partiality visible in the fair De Coupland. During the past afternoon the thought had broken upon his mind more vividly. Still, he feared that, however kindly the lady might have looked on him, the favour could only be construed as an emanation of grateful feeling towards one who had performed a service. The sweeter inference tempted, but

only to tantalize; for, were it so, to speculate on a crowning sequel, he believed would have been almost insane presumption.

“ ——— Ceremony has made many fools,
It is as easy way unto a duchess
As to a hatted dame, if her love answer :
But that by timorous honours, pale respects,
Idle degrees of fear, men make their ways
Hard of themselves.”

This, however, was not the knowledge of Raimond, or his times. He, besides, had to deplore the precedence of a formidable rival; eligible in age and person, and desirable from his rank and connexions. Such a suitor, accepted for aught he knew to the contrary, a sense of folly forbade him to oppose. But wherefore pursue a theme so unvaried, as the cogitations of a despairing swain?

Once more habited in the graceful garb of peace, the esquire proceeded, as in duty bound, to attend his lord, and escort him to his father's mansion; it being expected that the revels there would enjoy his presence. If the approving

survey of the homely dames he passed in his way could have given him the assurance he lacked in certain of his approaches, the supply would have been abundant.

In the language of certain writers, there occurs frequent celebration of a certain "*air noble—distingué*," whereby is meant to be implied some indescribable halo that plays around the persons of those fortunates who "live, move, and have their being" about the western squares of London. Now we have the firmest belief in the chartered radiance of this favoured race; notwithstanding that the most distinguished man of personage we ever saw, was a shabbily-dressed fellow who gathered halfpence on behalf of a party of street glee-singers; for, clearly, said individual must have been some frolicsome Lord Charles in disguise, or else the unhappy heir of a great house nefariously excluded from his birthright. Nevertheless, it is an impertinent fact that our modest friend Farneley, the son of a plebeian whose wife's virtue was unimpeachable, possessed pre-

cisely the sort of '*air*' we conceive is, or ought to be, indicated by the above quoted phrases. The thing is here recorded for the special satisfaction of such as regard these matters; with them it may win him higher consideration, and serve to excuse the *tendre*—is not that the term? to which the banneret's heiress had yielded.

After reaching the castle, he had not long to pace the floor of the rude hall, before he received a summons to the privy chamber of the warden and deputed constable—his immediate master.

This, like all apartments in the place, save the aforesaid hall, was small and dimly lit. Its accommodations were few, and included scarcely any of those comforts, which, though now indispensable, were little regarded by the hardy nobles of that time. The cold humidity of the walls was indeed concealed by hangings of coarse arras, and footcloths supplied the place of rushes; as to embellishment there was none. A table, covered with common tapestry on which lay writing materials and several detached

pieces of armour, occupied the centre, and was studded round with heavy oaken seats. The fortress being used solely as a military post, and not as a feudal residence, it is to be supposed that the temporary governor was indifferent to the nice condition of his quarters. On entering, Raimond respectfully acknowledged the presence of the brother Percies.

“Soh! sir squire,” cried Hotspur, “already in thy braveries, I see. Prepared to make a raid upon the hearts of the damosels in the good town here. I’ faith, man! there’ll be eyes upon thee! And, speaking of damosels, didst bear my homage to thy sire’s fair inmates?”

“As you commanded, my lord.”

“What, and blushed, as thou dost now, good Raimond?” propounded Sir Ralph Percy, mischievously.

“If I did, my lord,” answered Raimond, bowing, to conceal his confusion, “it must have been under a sense of my unworthiness to represent so pre-eminent a principal.”

“Rather, I should suppose, to carry the offering of so rough and unwonted a tributary,” said Sir Ralph, smiling at his brother. “Certes, however, sir squire, thy answer smacks of gentle breeding. Doubtless the demoiselles approved of the deliverer.”

To this, Farneley made no reply.

“Well,” said Hotspur, “so much to jest, now to other gear. Raimond, whilst we relax to-night in merry meeting, we must not forget the foe is near us—beshrew the tardy rendering of our barons that leaves him so unscathed! Make thou, my friend, the circuit of the walls at sunset, and see that the townsmen keep due watch and ward! Have parties of my own men-at-arms disposed for ready succour near the various gates! The task of observing the signs of the enemy’s host, I have committed to other hands, but choose thee for this internal duty, as best fitted from thy familiarity with the burghers and the place. Thou wilt, natheless, not be prevented joining in our revels—these behests being re-

membered; for, truly, I ween the Scot lies yonder more in bravado than with serious views upon the town. St. Oswin keep him longer in the same overbold humour! I have done, sir. Seek, now, thy pleasure, under this reserve of charge! Yet, stay a moment—how came, Raimond, those escapes of evil blood we noted this morning in Sir Rafe de Neville, directed towards thee?”

“I know not, my lord,” said Raimond, embarrassed, “unless it be that the proud knight deems the honour your favour has conferred upon so humble a man as myself, too much beyond his deserts.”

“And who gave him leave to sit in judgment on my acts?” said Hotspur, with quickness. “By the whiskers of my ancestor!* he shall not, were he twice a Neville! Harkee, sir squire, if thou art too hardly put upon, remember that you follow Percy.”

* The companion of the conqueror, Lord William Als-germons *i.e.*, William with the whiskers.

“ In no case can I forget it, and, least of all in this, Sir Henry,” answered Farneley, with obvious promptitude ; the sparkling of his eyes shewing the pleasure he had in the intimation.

“ Brother, you are inconsiderate,” interposed Sir Ralph, “ you halloo on a falcon, but too eager for the flight. The knight of Raby is petulant, I grant ; what then ? he is our kinsman, and of rank removed.”

“ Tush, Ralph !” rejoined Sir Henry, “ he envies the glory of our name, and vents his spleen on us, through our retainer. Albeit, ’tis not ill thought of. Observe, sir squire, I wish no sought-for ruffling. Keep thy station ; saving where thy manhood’s touched. And, specially, be restrained, should the Neville, as is likely, feast with us to-night.”

“ My lord, my father’s hospitality can meet no interruption at my hands,” replied Raimond. “ Indeed I do not anticipate temptation. The knight will hardly make himself *our* guest.”

“Be not too sure of that,” observed Sir Ralph, “your roof harbours an attraction that will make him spurn delicacy.”

“Towards those he holds beneath its exercise, your lordship might have added,” subjoined Raimond, the meaning bitterness of his tones modified by respect to his auditors.

“Come, sir squire, dismiss that thought,” said Hotspur, “’tis not one to be gratuitously adopted. As my esquire, thou art a gentleman; maintain thy title to all outward observances, but heed no further. The private sentiments of others may not be questioned, and would oft be wisely left unguessed. I will see thee again anon.”

Farneley withdrew.

“That spark hath a keen soul,” resumed Sir Henry, when the other had gone, “I should be loath to see it wounded. Our cousin’s *outré-
cuidance*, may well weary sufferance. Does he think the sun shines to gild his steps alone?”

“What property he makes in the sun’s beams I wist not,” replied Sir Ralph, “I have a shrewd guess ’tis the coveted right of engrossing beams from a pair of terrestrial luminaries has most to do with the matter.”

“*Diablerie!*—and where be those fixed?”

“They move—with the Lady Amise de Coup-land.”

“Ho, ho!—I see—I take. On my life, the squire is a bold pretender! Why, methought the Neville was assured in that quarter?”

“With his uneasy temper and warm love, assurance can only result from possession. Heaven help his addlepate! he was once jealous of thee!”

“Of me?”

“Nay, I wondered myself; but ’twas at his folly in seeing cause to fear such a left-handed squire of dames as thou art. You look strange to’t. Why, they say, thou wert once willing to have given him incitement.”

“ Ralph, thou art a fool like the rest,” said Hotspur peevishly.

“ Candid, if not courteous,” rejoined his brother, laughing.

“ Prithee, what grounds hast thou whereon to suppose Farneley jostles our cousin in his admitted suit?” asked Sir Harry, dismissing the personal innuendo.

“ Weak ones, I confess—the jealous hints and guardless ebullitions of Rafe himself. ’Twill be sport to-night to mark his humours down.”

“ Beshrew me now ! an’ the wench follow a woman’s caprice to bestow her heart on Farneley, ’twere a rich jest !” exclaimed Hotspur, after a moment’s musing. “ The high-born knight out-rivalled by the low-born squire ! why, ’twill be a tale for the minstrels. Then a son of the great Neville foiled by a simple vassal of North-umberland ! Whip me, if I think I could sorrow for our kinsman.”

“ But you might for old De Coupland’s disappointment.”

“Why ay, he has some right to hope better for his house. Yet he owes much to his lance, and ought to have regard to a wightly-handed springald, even though he may lack or and gules in his coat.”

“Is it not near the hour for the bailiff’s revel?” observed Sir Ralph, changing the topic, “I fancy it will. To keep the burgher magnates from their feast, were to bespeak a cool reception at their hands. A man’s popularity must be something of the strongest that will rouse the voices of a tired-out crowd.”

“True. But if that crowd be also a hungry one, and he bring with him the signal to fall to, then he will be received with an acclaim, though he were Mahound himself. Less literally, it is the same in all cases. The vulgar shout is but the cackle and clutter of barn fowls round an expected feeder; ’tis the grain, and not the scatterer, they salute. I take small account of such applause.”

“Nor I, saving so far as it is more cheering

to look out on a clear sky than a cloudy, even when without intent to stir abroad. By the way though, Hal, thou mightst lack something in thy rage for venturous exploit, did not common throats raise round thee an admiring chorus."

"Men love the dangers of the chase without prospective profit; may not I enjoy the hazards of a wilder pastime, and be equally without afterthought?"

"Certes, if ever a man struck in field for pure love of his labour, thou art he; still I suspect the game would lose its interest were it not for the attendant reputation.

"Ah! there indeed! Honour is the breath of morning to every true knight; but surely you do not hold that such, which issues from the lungs of scroyles and filthy mechanicals, whose clamours are bought by a holiday."

"No. But I would receive these as accessory, where honest. To no human excellence do the rabble yield a more natural and unprompted

tribute, than to valour. Of none are they better judges. It is a quality of which they have the germ in themselves; they can understand and appreciate it. Mystified and distanced by the statesman, they can fraternize with the soldier. Fighting is with them an animal impulse, and their admiration of a successful warrior is always hearty, when apart from other motives—”

“ Which it can scarcely be, unless the exciter is one of their fellows, who has fought yeomanly his bout at quarter-staff. Gramercy, Ralph! thou hast done thy best to prove me a sure title to the noisy favour of the commonalty; but, i’ faith, man! in a sort that does me scurvy grace!

Few men, famous for any even truly distinguishing attribute, relish the assumption that thereunto *alone* they are indebted for general estimation. The thought seems to limit and define merits, which they would fain believe, and have others believe unattainable. Sir Henry Percy was a warrior, and one of splendid

proportions; arms was his passion; yet renown therein, however transcendent, could not reconcile him to partial honours when the circumscribing line was made too palpable to him.

The noble brothers incontinently descended to the great hall, where they were joined by the lord of Wark, Redmayne, and Harbottel; also by the two Umfrevilles, the heir of Fitzhugh, and other young associates in arms; with whom came Sir Rafe Neville; all in the light vesture which for the present indicated nothing of warlike purpose.

“Soh, gentlemen!” said Hotspur, “the rough exercise of the day has not so wearied you, but that you are now anxious to fan the charms of the burgher’s dames with your plumed bonnets. Well! I see not that we should let our pleasures halt for aught we have to apprehend.”

“Why no,” rejoined De Grey. “Albeit, the Scot is wily.”

“And cautious, good Sir Thomas; he seeks

to boast of having bayed the lion, he will not put his head betwixt his jaws in earnest."

"By my fay! I think he plucks him by the mane, at any rate," observed De Neville. "Fah! I snuff the fume of burnt bannocks even here!"

"'Fore Heaven!" exclaimed Hotspur, chafing, "you upset my mind to this night's trifling. I had ten times rather make an outfall on these norland bisons. What say you, friends? the moon will serve anon."

Cogent objections were offered by the elder knights.

"Couch the knaves in peace, then," yielded Percy, "another day is coming. Cousin of Raby, you do us honour in your company; methought you would have preceded us to our resortment."

There was a dash of significant irony in the last address, pointed by the intelligence lately received, and called forth to repay the motive of the Neville's foregoing sally.

After a moment's haughty hesitation, the latter replied: "The chivalry here assembled have agreed to accord their countenance to the bailiff Farneley's entertainment. As *I* make one in compliment to the lord Warden of the March, to his person I attach myself in my repair thither."

The subterfuge and its inducement were seen through by both Percies, who could not suppress an interchange of looks. It was wormwood to the arrogant youth to use it: but he succumbed under a malady, that from time immemorial has made men its slaves. He burned for admission to the presence of his mistress, then residing in a mansion to which he neither would—nor indeed, as things had happened, could—personally stoop to solicit access, and thence warped his pride thus to seek a sort of casual entry.

"Thy fit of courtesy towards mine office and myself is somewhat sudden, cousin," said Hotspur drily. "Natheless, be thanked. And to

assure thee how highly such unwonted condescension is appreciated, I promise thee my humble interest with a certain peerless maid, to whose witcheries I shrewdly suspect I'm debtor for it."

"When I am certified of its worth, I may ask its employment, Sir Harry," retorted Neville, testily.

"La, ye there now!" rejoined Hotspur, laughing, "I make a kindly offer, and have it thrown back upon me with disparagement. May I be unhorsed by a hobiler, if I do not try to prove its value for some other behoof! But come sirs, here is my esquire waits to conduct us. We'll forth, with your good leaves!"

CHAPTER IX.

The devil knew not what he did when he made man politic ;
He crossed himself by it.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

THE shades of night, or at least such shades as are compatible with summer and a rising moon, having fallen upon the streets of the Newcastle, those pleasures which are supposed to comport best with hours of gloom, were generally indulged in spite of the outward menace. Children might scream and shiver in their beds, thinking of fell Scots, raw heads and bloody bones—aged spinsters and lone widows might brood o'er the terrors of violence and outrage—prudent

housekeepers might bar their doors and keep sleepless vigil; but in the greater number of instances, the young met in additional freedom of joy and hilarity, and the old found occasion to drain deeper the wine-cup and black jack. Round the house of Master Miles Farneley, loitered many idlers attracted by the lights, the hum of gaiety and twang of rebeck's thence issuing. Therein, the chief cavaliers of the vicinity, and the most reputed burgesses were assembled; but we must withhold thee, reader, from their society, until we have taken a peep into a dwelling in the immediate neighbourhood.

Along the opposite ridge of the runner which bounded the thoroughfare called the Side, wherein it will be recollected stood the bailiff's house, ran a line of quaint irregular buildings, known, from the vocation of their occupants, by the name of the Cordiners' Row. In one of these was the domicile of Halbert Snifbodle.

In an upper room of this habitation, seated

near a projecting window, that individual held grave colloquy with a private guest, who, during the breaks of their conference appeared to take peculiar interest in watching the bustle in front of Master Farneley's. The stranger, a formidable looking warrior, had thrown aside his bacinet and gauntlets, but in other respects reposed in full harness. His figure was imposing and manner lofty, though abrupt; contrasting strikingly with the flippant ease laboriously affected by Snifbodle. The latter, was evidently restrained and overawed by his companion; however, with the pertinacity often observable in persons conscious of being liable to light consideration, he strove to disguise it under an assumption of glib freedom.

"I tell thee, man," said the stranger, in answer to some previous difficulty that had been started, "however the enterprise may end, thy fortunes shall be cared for. Is not the word of a Scottish noble a bond to thee?"

"I depend on't, my lord—I depend on't,"

replied the other, with the air of one who has engaged to perform a service which he expects should command the return whereof he accepts the promise.

“Is my henchman sure to find the knaves thou spokest of?”

“As I directed, my lord—sure. An apprentice of mine attends him; there is no fear of mistake.”

“And can they be relied on?”

“For aught that holds them out the hope of bettering a condition already at the worst. Some, too, have a warm back cast to Scotland, as I have myself; albeit, your lordship knows that my personal sacrifice is too great to be made for country’s sake alone.”

“I have told thee it shall not. Can our plan be matured for action ere yon revellers (pointing across the way) disperse? ’Twere worth a mass to break in upon their mirth and shame their knightships!”

“The hour before daybreak will, I apprehend,

be the earliest at which we can have our aiders schooled and banded for the deed. Besides, not until midnight can your lordship's henchman drop in safety from the walls to advertise the manner to my lord Dunbar. We must step gingerly. I would not for a groat and a penny the scheme should fail, and shew my finger in't! The like o' you, my lord, may clear your way through the stoure by swing of heavy hand, but I doubt the same would serve me in poor stead."

"Methinks it would, indeed," returned Moray, casting on the speaker that glance of mingled pity and contempt with which the Brobdignagian portion of mankind are apt to survey the Lilliputian.

A man may acknowledge sundry of his incapacities himself, but relishes not to have them too readily caught up by others; so felt Snifbodle when his auditor thus fully confirmed his past admission. He, therefore, took some pains to insinuate that his personal fears were nought in comparison with his concern for the heavy

stake he ventured in the affair. The latter, he lost no opportunity of exaggerating.

The return of Ormiston, accompanied by two grim-visaged, ill-clad men, whose physiognomy and accent declared them born nearer the Grampians, here gave a fresh impetus to the business.

“Thou hast tried my patience woundily, sir henchman,” said Moray; “I could chide thee, but that it were difficult to conceive thy stay prolonged by idle indulgences.”

“That it were, I trow, my lord,” replied Ormiston. “When you have heard all that has detained me,” he continued, with a knowing look, “you will give me thanks.”

“Good. Meanwhile let us to the pressing care. These are countrymen and allies, I suppose. Save ye, friends!”

The confederates then proceeded to discuss and arrange their project, entering into minutiae not requiring record. In brief, it was concerted that the henchman, being smuggled over the walls at an unfrequented part, should

lead a body of Scots silently and suddenly to a particular gate of the town. The approach being timed and anticipated by a knot of desperadoes within, they were simultaneously to fall on the warders, and secure them entrance. This once obtained, the whole host of horse and foot might freely follow. The results of such a surprise were estimated the more highly, and its success considered the more certain, in that the English chivalry, viewing the vicinage of their enemy rather in the light of an insult from the Douglas than as threatening actual siege, had taken few internal precautions. Dismounted, scattered in hostelries, and denied time to don the defensive armour essential to the warriors of this age (a complicated business), it was expected they would be unable to offer any effectual resistance. Thus a rich booty would glut the rapacity of the assailants, and the march be crippled by the destruction or capture of its choicest defenders.

When this committee of strategy had brought

its conference to a close, and the inferior members had retired, Moray eagerly applied to Ormiston for his reserved report.

“So far our adventure promises well,” observed he. “Thus much for my country; now for myself! Well, Trusty; thou hast learnt something towards my secret wishes?”

“More than could be hoped, my lord! Therein I have had a special cast of fortune,” was the answer.

“Ha! excellent fellow! Unfold—unfold!”

“It is certain that, amidst the crowd that throng yonder lighted chambers (directing Moray’s attention to the bailiffs), the demoiselle Arnecliffe is at present to be found!”

“Why, so much I did before surmise, man, and counted nothing on’t. Wherefore make aught of that?”

“Hear me on, my lord! I only name it as an established point of outset. Hovering near the house to pick up the flying gossip of the rabble, I observed a female issue and take her way

along the street, as bound on some trifling errand. Her gait was familiar. I followed; and found her to be, as I had forethought, an old acquaintance—”

“ Ay, ay !—proceed.”

“ I nudged her memory, rounded a tale, and had not to complain of a deaf ear. To crack my nut at once, she is in attendance on the lady’s own person.”

“ Lucky rencounter ! But, to cut the matter short, you have made account of her ?”

“ I hope to do so ; as thus :—She has trysted to meet me in an hour at a wicket, opening into a garden behind the house. This, with the assistance of a guide, I have since ta’en note of, and can find alone. Now, if it please your lordship to accompany me thither, and have ready a billet or other token, it will be easy to prevail on this wench to convey it, whilst you wait in covert.”

“ Enough ! I see my way ! It shall be tried ! Leave me a moment, but be near.”

The henchman obeyed.

Moray, being left alone, endeavoured to compose his thoughts; a task, under the diversity of excitement wherewith he was surrounded, not a little difficult. His feelings were of a very intense and complicated nature; to speak in a strain recommended by prudence, and long approved in use, "easier to be imagined than described." To scrawl a few lines upon a slip of vellum, suited to the circumstances, and soliciting an instant interview, was no insurmountable effort; but to determine how he should afterwards act, was less practicable. His fierce, impatient passion, coupled with a wish to gratify an audacious humour by seeking a meeting in the teeth of danger, and thereby proving his love and daring, were prominent, though unsubstantial incentives. They were, however, backed by stronger suggestions. The hostility of the two countries, and the rankling memory of the present inroad, he could not but foresee, would long forbid him any unobstructed opportunity

of pressing his suit, even could he have decided on prosecuting it honourably. To employ the existing one, precarious as it was, to some lasting purpose, thence became a fixed desire. It transiently occurred to him, to postpone seeing Hester until the success of the planned surprise should place her fully in his power upon the morrow; the notion, however, yielded to the fear of a crossing contingency. This consisted in the extreme probability there was that, communicating so readily as Farneley's premises did with the castle, De Coupland and his family might, on the first alarm, take refuge therein, and thus his hopes be frustrated. For, to gain the fortress, as well as the town, formed no part of his expectations. Impressed with that hazard, he resolved on bringing his mistress, if possible, to immediate concession. To win her—to fly with him instantly to the temporary concealment attainable at Snifbodle's, or, at least, to prevail on her to evade the removal in ques-

tion, should it come to be agitated, was his primary object.

He was one of those persons who—whether from an intimate knowledge of the sex, or the utter ignorance of it, is apocryphal—hold that women are to be commanded by the men they love. Consequently, he persuaded himself into an opinion, that Hester's compliance with his wishes, should he be allowed season to urge them, was not an event to be doubted. Then, how did his spirit exult over the anticipated boast of having carried off an English demoiselle from within the very closest *cordon* of her guardians, including the warden himself—the redoubted Hotspur !

Whilst Moray plotted at the cordiner's, there was one elsewhere who had like to have taken totally superfluous share in the business. This was a party not a little interested, though that only collaterally ;—our old acquaintance Linny Tyzack.

Linny had been taking a stroll through the

town, or, peradventure, been indulging a curious disposition to study the character of his species, as developed in the genial atmosphere of an alehouse, when returning toward the bailiff's (where the kindness of Raimond afforded him temporary abode), he made, by chance, an unpleasant discovery. To be plain, he recognised his skittish helpmate pacing the pavement before him, squired by a tall rawboned stranger. Now having cogent reasons for believing that Mabel was no dragon in the cause of "smooth-cheeked virtue," he suffered an admonitory uneasiness about the temples, that induced him to slacken step and watch, *perdu*, the motions of the pair. From these, although they speedily parted, a lynx-eyed intuition enabled him to divine that an assignation had taken place. His first impulse was to join his spouse and convince her, as Mercury did Sosia, with fistic evidence, of his own forgotten existence; but that yielded to an inclination to probe the

matter further. He overtook her as she was entering the house.

“ Ahem !” he cried, smothering his spleen ; “ there’s company both at home and abroad to-night, it seems !”

Mabel coloured deeply, in evident embarrassment at this unexpected salutation.

“ It’s well for them that can pick up friends in fremd places !” continued Linny, grinning savagely ; “ I wish I knew the way on’t !”

“ Ou ! ye should just whustle through your loof for them !” flouted she, instantly recovering her wonted effrontery. “ If they do no’ come, ye’ll get your labour for your pains and be no loser.”

“ Ye could wise me of a better lure, an’ ye chose,” rejoined Tyzack, with bitter pertinancy.

“ Deed no—folk maun hae something to look at !” was the pert reply ; given with a toss of the head, which, whilst it interpreted her meaning, also proclaimed her vulgar vanity.

“ And to fool with too, belike !” retorted he, “ or thy chance had been o’ the smallest.”

“ Hout, Linny !” she returned, changing her tone into a propitiatory sort of whine ; “ ye make mouths before the porridge scalds ! It’s not for a poor lass that’s sent across door in a brawly night to put affront on any civil-spoken carle that takes to mind her the road. In to the kitchen, wi’ thee, man ! there’s stouth and routh for a’ comers. Look to thy own share ! I maun up to the Ladykin’s bower.”

After having thus, as she hoped, averted her goodman’s ire, Mabel hurried away in an affected bustle, and ascended to the upper apartments.

“ Ah ! thou’s a—thou’s a !” muttered he, as she flitted from him ; “ I’ll keep ken on thee, Mam Trollop ! Certes, tho’, ’twere no wise man’s deed to miss the cook’s feast. I trow such good-gifts don’t turn up at every step.”

With this “ tide and time” reflection, Linny made his way into the great kitchen, or com-

mon room, used by Master Farneley's domestics. There he truly found that the liberal bailiff had provided ample cheer for the various hangers-on usually in attendance upon such occasions. He by no means dismissed his suspicions, neither did he abandon his determination to satisfy himself concerning them; but the allurements now in operation caused him to procrastinate. It was owing to this circumstance that Mabel was left at liberty to make her promised appearance, where it was more anxiously looked for, or than she herself even supposed.

CHAPTER X.

A hall ! a hall ! their honours are coming !
You're welcome, gentlemen.

OLD PLAY.

THE vaulted passage, that formed the main entrance to Master Farneley's mansion, blazed on this remarkable evening with a light, to which in the height of noon it was unaccustomed. Numerous cressets were fixed along its extent, and men with flambeaus stationed around, as well to illumine as to regulate the approach. The doors were thrown open, disclosing the wide staircase and spacious vestibule. These, decorated with festoons of silk and

boughs of holly, presented exhilarating tokens of the festivity whereunto they led. The great parlour (saloon it would now have been called), at other times too large for comfort, proved in the present instance barely adequate to contain the assembled guests. The most distinguished of the warlike cavaliers, whom the occasion had summoned into the town, together with the chief burgesses and their families, made up the aggregate. In selecting the latter portion, care had been taken to secure chiefly the fairer branches; otherwise the martial gallants might have lacked admiring eyes, to follow the windings of their stately figures, and attentive ears whereinto to pour their bland effusions. For, however high your sprigs of honour may be habituated to carry themselves, at formal interminglings with *gens de roture*, they are seldom observed to have any aversion to the society of their blooming daughters.

Here were no chalked floors—no iced champagne—no quadrille band. The polished oaken boards sufficed without the first—side benches,

loaded with confitures, simnel cakes, piment, clary, and hippocras, well superseded the second—and the merry viol blending with the lively rebeck, answered for the last. A joyous but innocent freedom characterized the general deportment. The borough dames and damosels, happily ignorant of pseudo refinement, threw not over their admirers that ceremonious restraint, which, however it may conduce to maintain respect, certainly freezes the genial flow of spirits. In dance, the gay galliard was mostly preferred to the serious pavan; nor did the gentle salute of the hand, or even of the cheek, wherewith each was generally concluded, seem to be held at all indecorous.

Dame Farneley, gaily attired in a rich kirtle of orange tawny cyprus, overspread by a snow-white rocket, and having her jocund face framed, as it were, in the square fronted coiffure then in vogue, trotted busily from group to group; marvelling with the matrons (of whom there were few), inspiring the bashful maidens by an un-

limited dole of honied praises—and rallying with ironical goodhumour, the conceit and foppery of the gentlemen. So universal were her cares, so shrewd and kind, though honestly plain her manner, that she pleased all and left little to be required at the hands of her equally well meaning, but more punctilious husband.

Amisia de Coupland, naturally joyous, and habitually amiable, worshipped heartily the genius of the scene. Far from queening it amongst the female guests, as many ladies, similarly entitled would have done, she indulged unreservedly in the general amusement. Without entirely dismissing the barrier interposed betwixt her condition and too free collisions, she contrived to render it, when not wanted, imperceptible. In this deportment she was admirably countenanced by the brothers Percy.

These fine young men lost nothing in being divested of the rigid panoply in which they were customarily seen, when abroad. They indeed

constituted the centre of attraction; and the eyes of all present, more especially those of the fair damosels of the Newcastle, busily followed the noble and manly forms of the well-dressed cavaliers who figured on the scene.

The older knights, sedulously tended by the bailiff, congregated apart at the upper end of the room; whilst around them hung the mayor and his brother functionaries, willing to partake, or seem to partake, in their jocularities. Among this group it was evident that the hour being was esteemed but a dull period of the evening's pleasures, and that thoughts were impatiently turned upon the banquet, with which it was expected to finish. To no person did it appear to occur, except as matter wherewith to point an observation, that a fierce enemy lay encamped within a bowshot of the town's defences.

But Raimond Farneley, in whose honour the entertainment was, in some sort, given, must

not be overlooked. We have already described him as endowed in a degree likely to render that improbable, with any circle whereof he was a member. If he took not here so prominent a place as under the circumstances he might have done, it was because his perceptions were open only to one object, and his movements confined, like the revolutions of a satellite about its planet. That object—that planet, it is unnecessary to predicate. Thanks to the delicious interpretation which some recent circumstances appeared to justify, he felt no longer condemned, as formerly, to “let I dare not wait upon I would.” Thence, at every opportunity that offered, he planted himself by the side of Amisia, and even when others claimed her attention he hovered near, though restless, and ill at ease.

The pertinacious assiduities of one individual gave him particular torment : he, it need scarcely be told, was the Knight of Raby. This young

nobleman, too haughty to unbend to *les bourgeois* had he not had a stronger motive, offered unceasing and exclusive incense at the same shrine. Though privileged intimacy, rather than his rank, commanded the lady's gracious aspect, he proved the means of laying Raimond under painful probation. The ordinary juxtapositions of the night, and perhaps some dexterous management on the part of the desired fair one herself, alternately induced each of the rivals to suppose himself to be favourably regarded by the beautiful Amisia.

There is, in some things, a difficulty of dealing towards an opponent with whom one has come to avowed *outrance* greater than is experienced under the incident of a chance competition. In the last event the race can be freely contested abreast, and good luck be the winning gamester; not so in the first. There, the parties can only take the field by turns; for either the one must temporarily give way to the other, or a vulgar struggle, forbidden alike by pride

and propriety, must ensue. Then, if they be of generous spirit, any thing like petty interposition will be on both sides eschewed.

Precisely in this shape stood affairs betwixt Raimond and De Neville. Occurrences in the afternoon's jousting had made it impossible they could meet without a consciousness of direct personal enmity ; whence came a necessity for the above restrained observances. After what had passed, the very presence of the latter was an insult to the former, though place and season forbade it to be resented. The Neville appeared somewhat in the predicament of Romeo at the feast of the Capulets ; but Farneley shewed a stronger sense of courtesy than distinguished the " fiery Tybalt."

Thus situated with regard to each other, and attracted to a propinquity which either felt hateful, it was not to be expected that a collision could ultimately be avoided. Something of the kind was drawn on in the following manner :

Neville, possessed of Amisia's ear, and in the act of addressing to her a tirade of the inflated compliment peculiar to this chivalric age, was not a little mortified to perceive her attention wandering. Mortification, however, changed into positive rage, when he discovered that it was on the movements of the detested Farneley her erratic regards were bent. Equally sensitive and irascible, he involuntarily stopped short; his concluding words dying in a quaver betwixt his gnashing teeth. As the demon of mischief would have it, at that identical moment Raimond, in the discharge of a function becoming his connexion with the host, approached the lady, tendering to her use one of those ornamented boxes of confitures, then a customary feature in all festal meetings. The approximation thus unhappily timed, proved too much for the volcanic temper of the arrogant youth. Impulse anticipated thought.

"Thou dost mistake, sir squire," he broke forth, labouring to smother the semblance of

passion under tones of superciliousness, "carry thy service to the borough-maids—there may be of those will give it requital."

Surprise, indignation, and a possibly over-keen sense of nice embarrassment, struck Raymond momentarily dumb. He drew back, erect; but ere he could collect himself to launch the spirited retort his wounded feelings suggested, a gentle champion stood forward in his behalf.

"I know not, Sir Rafe of Neville," said Amisia, rising and looking proudly upon the knight, "whence it comes you do presume to hold a judgment on what is, or is not, to me a profferance befitting;—or to venture anticipations, on my spirit to acknowledge and requite. But this I know and tell you, sir, your freedom is as insulting to me as it is derogatory to yourself. Gentle sir squire (turning to Farneley), gramercy. I am honoured by thy courtesy."

He whom the last accosted had been lanced too near the nerve to be thus readily appeased.

He well appreciated the delicate feelings which prompted the attempt; but only received therefrom a double persuasion to assert for himself.

“Essoin me, sweet lady,” said he, “if, forgetting for an instant what is due to thy bland presence, I tell this misproud gentleman—

“Nay, nay,” interrupted Amisia, with real anxiety, but assumed playfulness, “thou shalt nor tell, nor think. I make this *my* quarrel, and forbid any intervention. Your arm, sir, I would walk awhile.”

She accordingly took the mechanically offered arm, and using a little winning effort, strove to lead Farneley from the spot.

Unlike too many heartless coquettes, she wished rather to stifle an angry difference in the bud, than by a dubious carriage give it room to expand. Her beauty needed not the *éclat* of an appeal to arms; still less did her heart covet such unfeminine triumph. To declare thus much is due to justice; but it may be con-

fessed that the quick alarums of love claimed a powerful influence in the matter.

The cruel fair of old were wont, we learn, to task the devotion of their slaves with dangerous gestic; whether the notions of that time encouraged this disposition, or whether romancers have employed it beyond true warrant, matters not; it is neither natural nor to be commended amongst feminine attributes. Let every swain seriously doubt the genuine affection of his Phillis, when she allows him to encounter peril for her pleasure, however speciously the occasion may be tinselled. But to return.

Raimond was flattered—deeply flattered by the interest Amisia shewed in his safety, which, by the by, evinced itself most by looks and manner. He could not, nevertheless, abandon his resentment at once.

“If, lady,” said he, partly replying to her, and partly meaning to address De Neville, “you design to pronounce this your quarrel, you only make it mine a second time. Sir

Knight of Raby, for the hour, this is forborne. Anon, you shall answer it, I am a sworn *élève* of chivalry, and *may* not be insulted ; I am a man and *will* not. Lady Amise, you now command me.”

Neville stood all this time a pace aloof, with arms folded and aspect expressive of the most intense disdain. When Farneley concluded, he was prepared to retort in terms which, being accidentally checked in utterance, may be aptly conceived in the language of a character in ‘Albumazer.’ He might have said:—

“ Art born of gentle blood and pure descent ?
—— ———— Is thy pedigree
As long, as wide as mine ? For, otherwise,
Thou wert unworthy ; and ’twere loss of honour
In me to fight.”

And to that effect *would* have spoken, had not the coming up of Hester Arnecliffe and the two Percies, restrained him to the silent defiance of a contemptuous look. It was not out of deference to them that he desisted ; any more than

from a hesitation of will ; but his pride inclined him to gloss over signs of a contention, the possibility whereof he disliked to admit, and wherein he had suffered a touch of discomfiture.

Hester and her companions did not appear aware of the full nature of what had just occurred. Something of agitation in the trio they could not fail to perceive, but did not choose to give it direct notice.

“How now, gallants ?” cried Sir Ralph Percy, “Methinks you look on each other like two Greeks I have read of, quarrelling at a king’s gate. Prithee doff your serious masks, and let us have merrier mummery.”

“Greeks, quotha !” rejoined De Neville, affecting a laugh. “What a fine thing it is to be a clerk ! Alack for me ! that there was no house of canons* near Raby !”

“Not so, Rafe, it would have been the worse

* The Percies had been admitted to a sort of honorary brotherhood amongst a community of Præmonstratensian canons at Alnwick.

for thee. England might then have lost a lance and yet ne'er gained a doctor."

"Admit the one, and you content me," said Sir Rafe. "The craft of the schools frames men losels. What stores the head of a monk, only fills the veins of a warrior with milk. Your English noble is bound to keep his country's honour, and, I trow! 'tis not kept with inkhorn and penner."

"The time for that may come," answered a voice which proved to be that of Father Noel, who glided past at the moment.

"Ha, ha," laughed De Neville, pleased to seize on any thing that might help to divert remark from what had occurred, "those will be quaint days!—Marry! why not anticipate them, and send out our friars and pilgrims to-morrow, to beat off these Scots in new fashion. Certes, we've enow o' them."

"Ay, and lusty knaves too," observed Sir Ralph. "What say ye, ladies? are ye content

the memory of the hazards ye have lately run should be thus extinguished?"

At this time a little congregation of guests had begun to cluster round the spot; amongst whom was Sir John de Coupland, who heard and took up Sir Ralph's proposition.

"By the day that left me slow at trencher!" exclaimed he, "if they cry content, so will not I. No, no. I have the reek of Corsinside still in my nostrils: like for like, is old law, and smoke for smoke no new one, on the border."

"Whate'er yon day's theft, Sir John," said Sir Ralph, "the Scots complain that thou hast oft since played the wolf and rent their coats."

"Have I not?" rejoined the old knight complacently. "By my soul, boys! but ye've your own part to play! An' I see not these running tups hacked short of horn, I'll sigh for the march manhood."

"Fear not, De Coupland," said Hotspur, who had hitherto been occupied in silently

marking the countenances of Amisia and Raymond. "The Bloody Heart shall bleed in earnest for the scath done upon our fields."

"Ay, and on our own hearts, brother," added Sir Ralph; seeing that the Scot had well-nigh dragged them from our bosoms and sent them captive to his barren land."

This speech was accompanied by a gallant obeisance to Amisia and Hester, which gracefully interpreted its meaning.

"Right, Ralph," confirmed Hotspur. "To be reft of the palm of our northern beauty was indeed to be bereaved! Harry Percy has been called insensible to soft regards: I will, in this, prove that he is neither insensible to the claims the fair have on the sons of chivalry, nor to the zeal these have to confess them in action: Lady Amise, in thy person the gentle dames of the March stand represented; thou hast been emperilled, visited with rude indignity, and we were forsworn of our order did we not make such a cause our own. That the adoption may be

established and proclaimed, I, not merely for myself, but on behalf of all these cavaliers, do beg a boon of thee. Bestow on us some token—some toy of thine, which, borne in our sight to-morrow, may remind us of thy charms and our high devoir. Join, gentlemen, join in my—in *your* request; I know *I* am but your mouth-piece.”

During the above harangue, all the younger cavaliers had thronged to the scene, and at its conclusion a general acclamation of rapturous approval broke forth. The young maids and dames of the town, nay, even the honest burghers circled admiringly about; delighted to witness personally one of those romantic enactments they had hitherto only read in story or heard sung by minstrel.

Amisia, unexpectedly made the cynosure of eyes, trembled with confusion, certainly not unmixed with pleasure. Her veteran father rubbed his hands in a transport of parental and martial pride.

“Essoin me, Sir Henry and noble cavaliers,” said she, “if, as a simple maiden, I feel overpowered by the honour thus heaped upon my poor deserts, and thence falter in the terms wherewith a grateful acknowledgment should be conveyed. ’Tis one of which I may be most emphatically proud. Would that the illustrious source from which it is imparted, could also impart befitting worth to her on whom it falls.” (A pause.) “Thus hastily ’quested, I scarce command what I can, with seeming, offer to your wishes—” she stopped, in a sort of smiling askance.

“A bracelet! a lock of your hair! a pencil of your sleeve!” were instant suggestions; breaking from as many distinct mouths.

“A lock of hair be it,” cried the old banneret, stepping in aid of his daughter’s hesitation. “I trust it will lose no value through being shred off by old John of Coupland’s own hand and dudgeon blade.” With action suited to his words, Sir John unsheathed his dagger,

and shredding from Amisia's head a long fair tress, placed it in her hand to be by herself bestowed.

"There, my child," said he, "use thy will; but first let me say, that never did truer knight ask badge of truer maid.

"Take it, Sir Henry," said Amisia, "and were not the admonition to thee superfluous, I would add, let it remind thee to fight—not for the poor donor, but for our England."

Hotspur proudly bending his knee, received the ringlet with that deferential homage which the canons of his order prescribed in all things that concerned the fair. Loud plaudits rang around.

"Ye hear, gentlemen—ye hear your charge," cried he, again erecting his muscular frame, "to me addressed—for all intended."

Up to this period Sir Rafe de Neville had looked on with a suppressed feeling of dissatisfaction: he now thrust forward as if pregnant with some demand, or remonstrance, but was

anticipated by a deprecatory gesture from Hotspur, who immediately resumed :

“ Proud should I be,” said he, “ to place this favour in mine own particular helm, but that would be a personal arrogation of the honour. ’Twould discontent so many of ye” (here he smiled, and glanced roguishly at his cousin) “ that, besides the injustice, I dare not meet the other consequences. Better rule must be taken for’t.”

Not only De Neville, but Fitzhugh, the noble Umfrevilles, our sprightly scion of the Delavals, and several other “ gentle” *élèves* of the ardent family of arms, evinced their interest in what was to come. For independent of the epidemic thirst for renown and the soft praise of dames, Amisia was the chosen beauty of her circle, and fondled as much from her winning manners, as admired for her unrivalled charms. The station of her sire, regarded as the father of the living chivalry in the province, superadded sentiment to any tribute of devotion offered to his child.

After delaying for a moment, as if on purpose to enjoy the speculative looks of his friends, he threw partial light upon his intentions by the summons of an individual.

“ Mine esquire—Raimond Farneley—stand forth !”

The party named, agitated to excess with mingled wonder and expectancy, answered to the call.

“ Raimond,” proceeded Hotspur, “ to thee I have before committed the keeping of my banner—that banner which is for the present—I will not say unworthily—the rallying sign of our March chivalry : that it may, in this conjuncture, be such with added reason, let this fair token be affixed—a rare and lovely pendant, to the selfsame staff. Thence shall it flutter before us in the summer’s breeze—to all an inspiring memento. Ye understand this, gentlemen, I hope ?” (appealing to the honourable companions lending ear.) “ Receive it, sir ; and now I need not tell thee thou hast a treasure to be guarded.”

The youth, bending over the ringlet to conceal his ecstasy, conveyed it to his bosom with more joy than ever bondman placed there the gold that was to buy his freedom.

“ A treasure, my lord,” he fervently iterated, “ which, even in thought, I will never quit.”

“ Oh ! Sir Henry ! I will be the esquire’s pledge for that,” observed Hester, significantly.

“ Then is he bound, indeed ! ” replied Percy, bowing gallantly.

A buzz of approbation arose in the room at the conclusion of this *scena* ; particularly loud amongst the townsfolk. They justly considered the trust reposed in Farneley as a compliment to their body. They were gratified by it, not only as reflecting a sort of credit on themselves, but also from a real regard towards the sustainer. Nor were the several impetuous youths (excepting one) who might individually have gloried in being chosen as the particular cham-

pion of so admired a maiden, able to censure an arrangement, which, as qualified by their Warden, and acknowledged leader, seemed meant to gratify all, and create no invidious distinction.

“Methinks, brother Hal,” whispered Ralph Percy, aside to Hotspur, “thou hast not displeased the fair De Coupland by thy distinction of young Farneley. Many dames might have looked sour, and thought thee but a left-handed gallant.”

“Why, I’m not quite a buzzard, Ralph,” returned he; “I did not choose my way altogether i’ the dark, man. If her face had not been enough a tell-tale, I might have been avised of her mind by Neville’s yellow hose.”

“Ha, ha! i’ faith they’re of a bright saffron! But, confess, my bygone hint came not amiss to thee. Thou art ever wont to see clearer through the bars of a visor than the folds of a lady’s wimple. Marry, Hal! when shall I see thee wear badge for thine own lady-love?”

“Um! sooner than you wot, mayhap. Do’st know when the bonny broom blossoms?”

“The broom!—what of that?”

“Why, I think a sprig on’t would become my crest. Hark, in thine ear, brother! it has another name—*Planta-genista!*”*

This said, Sir Henry nodded significantly and moved away.

We have already noticed, that amidst the general good humour of the assembly, there was an exception. Perhaps we might speak plurally, including the old knight of Coupland as well as he of Raby.

“Humph!” murmured the former to himself, “not arrogate personally!—not place in his own helm!—that was not the way of old—one of bold King Edward’s knights had shown more reverence to a lady’s gift. Ah! those *were* days! Then, given to be displayed by a base-born stripling, who—yet, no, no—I’ll not scorn

* Hotspur married Elizabeth Mortimer, great grandchild to Edward III.; of course, a *Plantagenet*.

the youth. It is a brave slip, though cut from a lowly tree. I marvel what the Neville will say to't !”

The reflections of the Neville were, indeed, far from grateful. Rage that his rival should be thus vantaged in position, and indignation upon principle (a strange perversion, the result of prejudice) that an ignoble person should be so inconsiderately (as he thought) distinguished, were their leading features. He began too to perceive, that however his aristocratic humour might prompt him to treat the esquire as one beneath the accord of combat, he would scarcely be able creditably to deny it, if demanded. Nay, he almost determined to forestall, and be himself the challenger. Utterly unable now to remain a guest to the family of a person with whom he now stood at declared variance, he took advantage of a succeeding movement to leave the house.

The stir was occasioned by the bailiff's announcing to his honourable visitors and friends

that “ a trifling foolish banquet ” awaited their acceptance in an adjoining chamber. Thither all hastened : the Percies with Amisia and Hester, giving graceful place to Sir John de Coupland with the worthy hostess, and to the spruce bailiff, who in like manner, carefully imitated, squired the portly mayoress Dame Bulkham.

CHAPTER XI.

Come away with willing feet—
Quit the close and breathless street;
Sultry court and chamber leave—
Come and taste the balmy eve.

* * * * *

With the quickening stealth of love.

MILMAN.

AFFECTING the free lounge of soldiers on a ramble to disperse the fumes of a previous carouse, Moray and his follower quitted Snifbodle's to seek the rearward locality of Master Farneley's premises. Favoured by mien and habit, and by dint of keeping the least frequented side of the streets (it is remarkable that all streets whatever have a thronged side and the contrary) they reached the desired vicinage, without the slightest difficulty. They found the

faithless Mabel, faithful to her ill licensed tryst, stationed at a small wicket which opened through a garden wall, upon the acclivity of the castle hill.

“ *Numero impure Deus gaudet,*” we are told in one of the Eclogues, but however that may be, such uneven society is detested by those who make tender assignations. Ormiston appeared sensible of this; for, in order that Mabel might not be prematurely startled by the presence of a companion, he accosted her, at first, singly. After duly preparing her by a story framed of such figments as his ingenuity supplied, he made signal to his lord; who, bringing into operation the occult virtues of palmistry, soon put an end to her scruples.

“ Wilt thou be trusty, wench? said Moray, when the ice had been sufficiently broken; “ thou hast a soft heart, I dare swear, and know’st too what courtship is.”

“ Ay, ay, that I’ll be bound for,” interposed

Ormiston; “bonny Mabel is no makebate to sweethearts.”

Mabel confirmed her claims to this character by promising fairly, and the Earl proceeded.

“Canst thou then get instant speech of the demoiselle Arnecliffe?” he asked.

“’Deed, I fear it ’ill no be easy,” she replied, “the ladykin’s among a brave company, and she’ll be loath to leave it if she be like most of her sort. There’s grand on-gauns in bye, and a feast ready for the down-sitting few would lose share of that could help’t. Oh! judikins! what store of dainty vivers and—”

“Ne’er mind them now, good wench, but bethink thee whether another gold piece be worth thy winning,” interrupted Moray.

“Red gowd ne’er came wrong, I wot, and for the earning, I can but try,” was the all-sufficient answer.

“Bear then this billet—convey it to the lady in what fashion thy wit can devise, so it be un-

seen. Tell her you wait to guide her hither. As you speed so shall be your guerdon."

A word or two more, and Mabel taking the scroll, disappeared.

"Ormiston," said Moray, after she had gone, "conceal thyself hereabout. "Should aught chance to me thou canst not mend, let it be thy care to fly straight to Snifbodle's. Warn him that, with or without my active participation, our plan against the town still holds. Then hasten thou to scramble o'er the walls, and perform the duties already assigned thee. Thou wilt find my lord Dunbar on the alert."

The henchman, in conformity to these orders, placed himself among some bushes near the wicket, which they had both passed; Moray advancing on to a patch of grass-plot beyond. A few orchard trees in full leaf, contributed a shield to the spot, and the night was cloudy, otherwise the struggles of the moon might have exposed this piece of audacity to a reckoning. Here

the Earl paced to and fro, cursing "tardy-gaited time," the while.

"The ban of St. Duthack be on that thick-ribbed pile," he muttered inwardly, as he looked up to the embattled keep that towered at no great distance; "but for it, this fool's trick of hardiment need not have been acted—but for it too, this wode devil—this Hotspur, would have been a certain prey to this surprise. What if Hester come not? she has an untoward spirit, and some touch of highflown patriotism. What if she betray me to her countrymen upon a point of virtue? Women have done such things; but not often—never, when love answered. Ha! yes—she comes—and half my will is wrought."

A tall white figure was indeed visible, tripping hastily down the walk. The next moment Moray held his mistress in a vigorous embrace.

"How—why is this, my lord?" cried Hester, in agitated tones, "what does it betoken? I dread to ask."

“ A Scottish peer’s devotion to an English maid. Is the assurance so dreadful to thee ? ”

“ Ah, no ! but you *here*—you ! the foe of my nation ! a chief amongst the hostile band that leaguers us e’en now ! I tremble—for thee—for—”

“ For thyself ? ”

“ Not in vulgar fear ;—but—in short, I am surprised—confounded.”

She bent her sometimes languid, but now glancing orbs wistfully upon her lover’s face ; whilst he, as if partially offended, withdrew the arm that had heretofore supported her.

“ These are cold words of greeting,” said he, reproachfully, “ think’st thou, Hester, ’tis a page’s venture, to brush the beards of English yeomen, as I have done to gain this meeting ? ”

“ Most soothly not. It is the daring—and thence, the portent of the act astounds me.”

“ It vouches for my passion—is that portentous ? I believed it had been otherwise ; but I see I have been fooled.”

“Not in thy love, my lord. Resolve me one thing, and then behold the grateful transport that struggles in my breast, and leaps towards thine.”

“Pronounce it. What would my Hester?” demanded the Earl, his brow unbending.

“Thou art a Scot, my Moray. Fame has voiced thee adventurous in the wiles of war. I would ask of thee, has thy present purpose aught in it of such?—no covert design of wrack upon my friends? Answer, on the word of a knight.”

Moray was a warrior not a courtier. Not that he had any conscientious scruples on the score of dissimulation, but he wanted the ready tact of practice. The appeal to his knightly word, a pledge which pride and habit rendered strong where all other ties were weak, staggered him—he hesitated.

“My lord,” said Hester, perceiving this, and making a powerful effort to suppress more feminine impulses, “I wait your disclaimer, the

name of Hester Arnecliffe shall never be coupled with a tale of treason to her country."

By this time the Scot recalled his forces. Satisfied that his mistress's reserve did not spring from indifference to himself, he rather admired her bearing than the contrary. He, however, determined to subdue it, and cared not by what means.

"My object is attained when *thou* hast crowned it," said he, dissembling; "*love* is my incitement—love alone. Hester, thou hast sworn love to the Moray, now is the time to prove it. Surely I have this night proved mine own. Long may it be ere I can again set foot upon this soil—much may occur the while. This makes the occasion precious. A means, these moments are too short for fully explaining, opens to me the power of leading you hence."

"Whither, and to what wouldst thou lead me?" interrupted the maiden, wildly.

"To happiness, and a baron's home," he

rejoined ; “ if these invite thee, fly with me instantly. Provision is made for’t.”

The speaker was a man of high rank in his country, the auditor a simple unportioned maid in hers ; suspecting no deceit, is it surprising that love and ambition should tug hard against cooler thoughts. She was in a delirium.

“ You press me too suddenly, my lord,” she faltered, “ I am bewildered.”

“ Palter not, with me, Hester,” said he, with passionate energy. “ I have no skill in puling. I cannot—will not live on laid-up hopes. Either decide at once to share my fortunes, or here our foolish dream must end.”

A sense of what was due to herself shot across the mind of the demoiselle ; she stilled the tumultuous throbbings within, and looked steadfastly upon her suitor, and then addressed him in calmer and firmer tones than heretofore.

“ If I must needs be precipitate,” said she, “ let me not be also weak. My father’s

daughter may be rash, but must not rush upon an idiot's venture. Assure me, Moray: is there no reservation in thy breast? are thy proffers made all in honour? Do you swear it?"

"I do," answered the chieftain, partly moved by real passion, but in the main, indifferent to what prepossessions might be required to forward his designs.

The prompt reply produced its effect. Folded in the arms of her lover, Hester lingered in that silence, which from time immemorial has been held to express a fair one's assent.

"Our season wanes, my love," urged Moray, softly: "the minutes are priceless."

"They are, indeed," murmured the maid, "even now my absence, but triflingly excused at first, must have drawn on some note. I'll now steal back—a few preparations, and then—"

"Nay, my life, that may not be. Perils environ; which myself I heed not, but as they

come 'twixt thee and me. Such return would be fatal. 'Twould be to tempt a sundrance."

Replication was checked by an untoward incident.

"My lord! my lord!" cried Ormiston, stretching from his ambush. "Be on your guard! I see a man coming down the walk."

"The fiend founder the limbs that lead him hither! is he alone?"

"He is—and, now I mark him better, methinks the fiend has already been somewhat busy with his limbs: sure—I know his pace; he may be easily dealt with. Away, my lord! away with the lady, and leave this fellow to my disposal."

"Gracious Heaven! what's to be done?" exclaimed Hester, in distraction.

"Cling to me, love," whispered Moray, supporting the trembling girl, and drawing her towards the wicket. "To bear thee to refuge shall be my first and dearest care."

“Mary Mother! must I then take this step,” she tremulously murmured. “My mind misgives me—yet I feel I cannot recede.”

Meanwhile, the interloper, who came on with the stealthy air and prying outlook of one expecting to make some discovery, arrived near enough to distinguish, though not to identify, the figures of the earl and Hester; Ormiston having again withdrawn from view. No sooner did he do so, than quickening his hobble into a sort of sprawling bound, he threw himself upon them. His gestures were extravagantly furious, and he brandished above his head a fearful leaden mallet, being one of the weapons frequently used by the infantry of the preceding age.

“Ho, ho! ye’re out-ta’en, are ye?” cried he, in a voice inarticulate with rage. “Ye thought to ha’ the play all to yourselves, and no thanks to them that left it ye! A black malison on ye both, and another on myself, if I repay ye not soundly!”

Seconding his threat with action, Tyzack, for he it was, mad with ale and jealousy, swung round his ponderous implement to launch it at the fugitive pair, when he was promptly confronted by the henchman.

On this apparition of a second enemy, of whose person he began to have some vague recollection, new fears broke upon Linny's mind, and he immediately raised a cry of alarm.

"Help! — rescue! — rogues! — reivers!" he vociferated, and set seriously to work to keep the henchman at bay with his mall. By dint of its sweeping revolutions he for a time succeeded.

"What make ye so long," shouted the Earl to Ormiston, "cleave down the rascal lout; he'll raise both town and castle on us. Nay, if thou canst not, I must help. Sweet, thy leave awhile."

Moray then drawing his brand, rushed to the aid of his vassal, and the life of poor Tyzack would indubitably have fallen a sacrifice to his

blundering jealousy, had not footsteps and voices, or a voice, been heard approaching.

“The game is up, my lord,” cried Ormiston, “’tis twice in vain to persist.”

“By hell’s flames!” returned Moray, “come who, come may, they shall have blows for’t! This oaf shall die the death, though it were e’en a poorer spite!”

With the denunciation, he severed at a stroke the staff of the luckless jerkin-maker’s weapon, and would anon have repeated the experiment upon his head, when the henchman seized his arm and dragged him by main force to the wicket.

“Thou art right down wode, my lord, to delay a moment,” he expostulated, all the while enforcing retreat by manual means. “You foam now, to-morrow you will thank me.”

“Away—away!” entreated Hester, wringing her hands imploringly. “For my sake, if not for your own; away, and save thy life.”

The Earl yielded to necessity and fled, with his vassal.

In another instant he had been secured in the nervous grasp of Raimond Farneley.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Loves me, sayest thou ?—thou who keep'st her thoughts ?
Oh ! grateful price of silence ! you buy me
O'er and o'er.”

THE young esquire had torn himself, unwillingly enough, from the rapture of contemplating, with a persuasion more allied to hope than he could have conceived possible, the soft beauties of the lovely De Coupland, for the purpose of attending to the night's military duties. Taking the nearest way to the court of guard at the castle, which we have before described to cross the ground of the foregoing scene, the outcries of Tyzack had rather hastened than occasioned his critical advent.

“Treason, foul play!” shouted the latter, perceiving the welcome aid. “Follow, sir! follow! Raise the hue—they’re Scots! I’ll swear it?”

Catching the purport of these words, Raymond made no stop, but dashing at the wicket, would have made through in pursuit, when his passage was arrested, and he found himself detained by a female hand.

“Move not—chase not, I entreat—I implore you!” exclaimed his holder in agonized accents. “Proceed no further, as you’ve a heart!”

“Release—how! the lady Hester! impossible!”

“It is—it is, too truly. Oh! sir squire, as you regard a lady’s prayer, stir not in pursuit!”

Trembling for the life of Moray, which she believed would inevitably be the price of capture under such circumstances, loving him with a fervour more proportioned to the intensity of her own character, than to the amount of his

deserts; and oppressed, as a delicate-minded woman always is, with a dread of slanderous notoriety, she hung upon the arm of the amazed youth, confounding all his active intents.

“Essoin me, gentle lady,” said he, striving tenderly to free himself. “Thy prayer would be potent with me, did it involve no more than it mayhap, to thee, implies; but the town itself’s in danger. Whilst I stand here, all that I hold dear may be in peril. Unhand me, I beseech thee!”

“Believe me there is no cause for apprehension,” returned she, “I—I alone am the unlucky mover of this untimely coil.”

“You may be deceived, lady. I fear you are,” continued he, making a renewed attempt to get away. “Every rule of arms forbids me to listen. My duty, a special charge laid on me by the Warden.—”

“Is no way compromised. Oh! by the love you bear Amise de Coupland! I conjure you, let this matter pass!” Then, finding her powers

of detention failing, and forgetting every other consideration in the one immediate, she added, "By *her* love, I conjure thee!"

"By her love!" iterated the esquire, completely wrapt, and in his turn letting every other thought escape.

"Yes, yes," confirmed Hester, still unmindful of her speech, "'tis thine, firmly and fondly thine. Let the knowledge command thy service to her all but sister."

If Raimond was before embarrassed how to act in an affair so delicate, this averment struck him with entire incapacity. His blood leaped in tumults. He was stupified with ecstasy. Next to listening to the same blissful language from the proper lips of his beloved, seemed its authority, coming from those of her bosom friend and probable confident.

"You breathe an assurance, lady," he at length found voice to say, "which enslaves me even to my own destruction. Come on't what may, those who have flown I leave to take their

course to haven. So much I grant to thy wishes ; but this promised for them, I must at any rate frustrate their possible designs. And, I may not tarry whilst such mischief hovers. Retire to the house and calm all private fears."

" I will," said Hester, composing herself, and, in some degree, resuming that loftiness of manner from which she had throughout this affair so unwontedly departed. " Has my absence been noted ?"

" It could not fail to be so, lady," answered the esquire, bowing ; for at no time did the gallants of these chivalrous days forget the conventional incense due to highbred dames, " else have our cavaliers been stricken eyeless. Natheless, midst the din of wassail it has escaped questant remark. Time flies so swift with revellers, that I dare be sworn thou may'st return without vexatious marvel on thy stay. Why you see, even this fellow's noise has failed to bring out a living soul."

" Ah ! true of him !" exclaimed she, per-

turbed by the reminiscence, “ where is he ?
He must be silenced.”

“ He shall—that be my care. For thy health’s sake, as for other reasons, quit this unwholesome air.”

Hester, first pressing the esquire’s hand in token of grateful reliance, turned away and hurried to the house.

Raimond then called Tyzack, who had been standing agape at some little distance in a maze of drunken perplexity, and interrogated him upon his share in the past matter. A few words of our own will make it intelligible to the reader.

Linny had found enough of mirth and good cheer amongst the servants of the bailiff to dulcify his temper, spite the unpleasant jar it had sustained at an earlier period of the evening; when, casually learning that his spouse had been seen passing into the orchard without known inducement, his former suspicions returned. Stealing after her, he obtained a

cursory peep which confirmed them. Inebriated and infuriate, he hurried back to arm himself with the ponderous mall, in which he afterwards found such good account. During his search for this, Mabel, whom he really had at first seen, performed her mission, and probably getting some notion of what was intended, kept wisely out of the way. However this might be, Linny on his reappearance in the field, perceiving as before, a couple of opposite sexes in conversation, made no doubt of its being his spouse and her paramour, and thence pounced on them in the manner already detailed.

“ Well, Linny,” observed Farneley, “ thou hast reason to be content, man. It seems thou hast wronged thy Mabel after all.”

“ Ah! a pest on the jade! I’m not clear o’ that,” muttered Tyzack. “ There were twain o’ them runaway louns.”

“ Nay, think not of that, but hie thee and comfort her. And mark, my friend, not a word of this business—no babble—no tripping on the

name of yonder demoiselle. Woe to thee if I hear of such !”

The esquire next lost not a moment in repairing to the court of guard, and stating only general suspicions, caused proper measures to be taken for the security of the town. Parties were sent out to patrol the walls until day-break, and the ward at the several gates was strengthened and put on the alert. He also roused the vigilance of sundry prudent burgesses in different quarters, and pledged them to keep stirring watch for the rest of the night. In this he felt bound himself to partake.

We now follow Hester in her re-entry into the cheerful assembly from which she had been so agitatingly summoned. On her resuming her seat at the board, she was happy to find that a few gallant reproaches from the gentlemen, and a kindly solicitous but unpointed inquiry from Dame Farneley, were the only open annoyances she had to encounter. The whole of what has just been related had passed with

so much rapidity, that whilst she looked round and beheld every thing in almost the selfsame state in which she had left it, she could have fancied the adventure a dream. There was, however, a combustion in her bosom, and a racking in her brain, which fixed a feeling conviction of the reality. From Amisia's warmer interest, and closer observation, she had prepared to suffer a trying ordeal; the which she shrunk the more sensitively from meeting, under a keen self-reproach for having been an unauthorized proclaimer of that maid's secret sentiments. But herein too, she was spared beyond expectation. Amisia, like herself, endured a hidden uneasiness that engrossed her whole mind. Surmises of the most painful nature connected with the secession of Farneley and De Neville had been generated.

The grosser viands being removed, and colloquial interchanges swelling into a more general chorus, the *distract* mien of the pair became obvious to remark.

“ What wizzard, envying the happiness of us poor varlets, has stole away these ladies’ smiles ? ” exclaimed Sir Ralph Percy, directing eyes to Amisia and her friend. “ Do they regret the merry round so much, or is it that the coarse pleasures of the board disgust their rarer taste ? ”

Neither seemed quite prepared to answer ; so Dame Farnley jocularly took up the case.

“ Haply,” said she, laughingly, “ the sweet birds are affronted to perceive that the devotion you false flatterers have sworn to beauty is naught, being to be cast off with each return of trencher time.”

“ Ha, ha ! if I thought so, I vow, by their own white hands ! I would forswear sirloin, and live all time to come on air and kisses,” rejoined Sir Ralph : “ always provided, I am allowed liberal dole of the last. Wilt ensure me that, dear dame, an’ I engage ? ”

“ I’ll answer thee, that gentle maids are

grateful when gallants are true," replied the dame.

"Ensure him a fool's bauble, dame," cried old De Coupland. "Under favour, Sir Ralph, thou dost deserve one for the speech. To my thinking, the reve's hind that kisses first the dairy-wench and then the cream-bowl, makes the better paction."

"Fy on thee! Sir John, thou dost belie thy memory," said the hostess; "thou hadst no such peasant hankering when thou didst woo thy stately dame."

"Tut! you mean, I did not tell her so. Mass! she might ha' complained o' cold suit, had I sought her side fasting. Tell me honestly, dame: when thy master here came a courting thee, didst ever like him the worse for having had his courage backed with a nunchion of beef and a stoup of canary?"

"Nay, Sir John," said the dame, goodhumouredly affecting a hesitation, calculated to

indulge the jest, "these are far-gone days—you task me too sore to call them back."

"Aha ! bailiff," chuckled the knight, pleased with the implied admission he thought he had obtained, "thou couldst tell a tale o' them, and make it rhyme to my reason, too. 'Sbody, man ! ne'er shew a blush ! thou'rt not the first suitor by a thousand, that has won a wench's consent by spur of wine-cup."

"When I was young," began the bailiff—

"Tush !" interrupted Sir John, more hilarious than well-mannered, "we've all been young—the greater pity we couldn't keep so. By'r worship's leave, and yours all, sirs, I'll give ye the memory of a princess that flourished when *I* was young. One that loved to see men feast—ay, and fight as well. Had your sires been round me now, as they have been, how they would have leaped at the toast ; ye, their sons have only *heard* of Neville's Cross and bold Queen Philippa—but that's enough. A rouse, friends ! a rouse to the name of the fair Scot-queller !"

The challenge was joyfully accepted, and a round of brimming cups drained to the old knight's toast.

"If he gets cock-a-loop on Neville's Cross," whispered the knight of Harbottle to Sir Matthew Redmayne, "we'll have a spell of it. 'Twere best strike in a word to turn the story."

"Nay, i' faith! I don't much care," returned the other: "the tough old blusterer's prowess in the feasting-hall got an everlasting clog on that occasion; 'twould be too bad to tie up his tongue, and disfurnish him altogether."

"Then I must essay myself. Speaking of Neville," he observed aloud, "what has become of young Sir Rafe? He was unwhile amongst us."

"Oh! he's doubtless gone to practise what my brother here only promises," said Hotspur. "When he learns to live the day through on air, 'tis to be hoped the ladies will not deny him his duly earned rere-supper. His dreams to-

night will be on a certain sunny silken tress ; and I fear me, I've yet his anger to encounter for daring to expose it to the salute of the winds. Thou wilt uphold me in the deed, fairest Amise ?”

Whilst he spoke of Neville he threw a sly glance at the demoiselle whom he finally addressed ; witnessing in her cheek as bright a suffusion as his sportive humour could desire. His concluding appeal drew a reply.

“ All I can have to bestow on any act of Sir Henry Percy,” said Amisia, “ saving that whereby he has chosen to lavish undeserved honour, is, and I am sure ever will be, my poor meed of applause.”

Sir John, notwithstanding the manœuvre of Harbottle, did launch in full career upon the glories of Neville's Cross ; finding amongst the borough elders an unsatiated auditory. Whilst he proceeded in rambling strain, Amisia and Hester, both anxious for the relief of being alone, rose and retired. The step was imitated

by Dame Bulkham, and the rest of the female guests.

The martial gentry and the civic dignitaries, now amalgamated by the genial influence of the grape, spent the short time they afterwards remained together, in the wordy celebration of warlike gests and strokes of policy. Many mantling cups were quaffed to the confusion of Douglas, Scots and Scotland, and as many to the fame of English arms and the inviolability of English land. One deeper than the rest was drained to the health and long life of the "stout earl at Alnwick"—the bulwark of the border.

CHAPTER XIII.

One wore his mistress' garter, one her glove,
And *he* a lock of his dear mistress' hair.

DRAYTON.

They saw the princely crest,
They saw the knightly spear,
The banner and the mail-clad breast,
Borne down and trampled there.

HEMANS.

MORNING broke upon besiegers and besieged, and found both in the same relative position; the Lord Warden not strong enough in effective force to set the town upon the hazard of a general battle, and his foes still disposed to persist in their bravado. Whether Douglas really entertained any hopes of taking the place by assault, or whether, building upon Hotspur's impetuosity, he calculated on luring out the English to a disadvantageous combat, which might end

in that result, is at this time uncertain. Largely imbued with the spirit of the age, he at any rate cherished a burning desire to come to a decisive personal arbitrement with his rival, and reckoning for impunity on the scattered state of the March military, delayed his retreat to offer a second day's challenge at the barriers.

The plan of surprise, concocted by Dunbar and Moray, either impeded by the contravening precautions of Farneley, or checked by other causes, seemed to have been abandoned; for the night had passed over without any symptoms of such an attempt.

Again, as the day advanced, did the townsmen, equipped in harness of war, crowd to the walls, and again did the enclosure before the western gate, glisten with bright panoply.

Amongst the gallant knot of esquires that followed the redoubted young warden to the above ground, Raimond Farneley was the most observed; swaying aloft the white lion and its companion crescents. Tastefully entwined and

knotted with a golden cord, the glossy memorial intended to warm the blood of the younger chivalry, was appended to the banner-staff. Oft indeed were the eyes of the bearer furtively cast up thereto, and upon him at least the sight had a magic influence. Fantastic as the asking and present exhibition of this boon may appear to matter-of-fact moderns, it took place in the full spirit of the era, and the readers of Froissart will recollect many enactments quite as romantically gratuitous, and some infinitely more absurd. Nor were they, in scenes where individual daring was so continually required, without substantial effect. Indubitably, Raimond sat proud of his charge. His government of self and steed might well be admired, for it abundantly justified the esteem in which he was held by a warlike lord. If it be true that

“ ——— no man riseth by his real merit,
But when it cries clink in his raiser’s spirit,”

the esquire had only the stronger cause to feel flattered in his luck of patronage.

Save the knights and their esquires, no other part of what we may call the garrison of the town, that is to say, the ordinary men-at-arms belonging to each knight's following, issued beyond the gates. The Scottish leaders on their part were expected to make an equivalent disposition, posting their main array reasonably in the back ground. This they in fact did. We have hereinbefore alluded to the mutual understanding which controlled the parties' sort of combat coveted on both sides; by that, these arrangements were dictated.

Thus, unbounded lists were left clear for practice of the martial games wherein the ancient gentry sought alike glory and grateful excitement. The disregard of life and limb manifested in these encounters, was certainly great; but not so startlingly excessive as people now-a-days, dazzled by the flourishes of poetic story, are apt to imagine. The iron shells in which the Paladins battled served a double use. It was truly said of them by King James of Scotland, that they

not only prevented the wearer receiving harm, but also his doing any. Indeed *our* chief wonder must be, how they could be borne at all. Nevertheless, mighty blows were given and taken by our ancestors in such guise; their conflicts rather resembling the labours of the smith at his forge, than the simply vital cut and thrust of a later period. Without question, the fields of Cressy and Poitiers were very different affairs from the accumulations of manœuvre and mere demonstration which now decide the fate of kingdoms. In this later order of warfare, the object seems always rather to threaten than to fight, and differs from the older, as a sparring-match differs from a downright set-to. Were it not for the *slight* incident of ball being substituted for blank cartridge, one might as well see a review in Hyde Park, as a battle in Flanders.

The rival chivalry, separated by the space of a half bowshot, displayed a front of readiness, each band to the other. Every individual, erect

in steel-bowed saddle, with lance in rest, shield *brased*, and beaver down, waited impatiently warrant to test his valour. Ralph Percy and Rafe de Neville, stationed at the side of the Warden, ready to second him in his boldest flight of daring, were already exchanging with him the last promptings for action, when Sir John de Coupland, followed by Mouboucher, came up, and took post in the ranks.

The venerable banneret was fully equipped, and sat bolt upright in his stirrups, as if wishing specially to mark his unimpaired efficiency. In his hand he grasped a heavy sperthe, or battle-axe, which he wielded with an arm more willing than able. Altogether it was obvious, in many ways, that he essayed an effort beyond his strength. His appearance roused a universal protest against the exposure it entailed.

“What, again, Sir John!” exclaimed Neville, whose intimate relations with the knight caused him to take more interest in his case

than any tenderness of nature would have suggested; "'tis too much! Believe me, you overtask yourself. Besides, the exertion is uncalled for by our need. The Scots will flout us if we endure such help."

"My help *has* been thought worth having, boy!" returned De Coupland. "And though I had no more pith left me than serves an old crone to roll out her griddle cake, yet should this March have the offer on't."

"It was made yesterday," urged Sir Rafe: "you then proved more than enough thy warrior's will, and too much shamed our sufferance."

"Be avised, Sir John!" interjoined Sir Matthew Redmayne; "we may not waste another day in joustings lance to lance. Amidst the rush and jostle of an indiscriminate *mêlée* thou may'st in right earnest be entangled, and thy safety placed fairly beside our care."

"Who asks that care?" demanded the banneret, hotly; for Redmane, though a younger

man, having in some measure been his contemporary, he felt more galled by his counsel than by that of Neville, whom he looked upon as a giddy stripling. "Or, who dreads such entanglement, as thou art pleased to call it? Think'st thou I come here to act a pageant? John of Coupland has not been used to cower and duck, shunning the stoure, like a woman or a footpage; and methinks, Redmayne, thou should'st know it."

"Valiant Sir John!" said Ralph Percy, "the odour of thy past achievements should not be played away on an unequal chance."

"Peradventure, you think my following is weak!" returned Sir John, evasively, glancing at his solitary vassal. "I wot I bring not all the spears my tenure binds me to send out; by and by, I may have them at my back. Meanwhile, here's old Mouboucher and myself may stand for a brace."

"Twain better than ye *have been* baron never counted!" rejoined Sir Ralph; "but the

day is come when the lives of younger and less worthy men must be set on venture."

"Indeed, Sir John, this may not be!" enforced Hotspur, compelled unwillingly to withdraw his attention from the confronting array. "It were a thrice-dyed scandal to us in all future report, did we permit a knight of thy fame to chance being beat down in his age. I should ne'er be able to face the Earl, my sire, did he hear I had so far forgotten myself and him, in thee his ancient friend:—for his sake, and in his name, I pray you to retire."

To these he added other entreaties, even hinting at some imperative measure in case they were not listened to. De Coupland, at length, consented to draw off; more moved however by inly felt physical admonitions of the propriety, than by the persuasions of his friends. Scarcely had he satisfied these by an overt manifest of his submission, when they found more pregnant matter to occupy them.

"St. Oswin's benison be on our deeds this

hour!" exclaimed Hotspur; "for, by my spurs! here comes a challenger!"

As he spoke, a Scottish knight started from amongst his countrymen, and, shouting his battle-cry, amidst a flourish of trumpets on his side, shook his lance to invite an adversary.

"Beshrew the untimeous parle that's given them the first escry!" muttered Sir Henry. Then, issuing his command at pitch of voice, he proceeded: "Wind trumpets;—wind lustily! Let brass answer brass, and then fair play to Bordeaux steel."

"A Graeme!—a Graeme!" shouted the advanced Scot.

"The Lord Monteith, as I do believe!" observed Hotspur; "*he's* not my mark."

"He shall be mine!" cried Ralph Percy, spurring out.

The opposed knights lost not an instant in preliminaries, but plunged simultaneously upon the mortal course. Their joining career was

watched with breathless interest, each looker-on nerving himself for a similar dash.

They met. Both lances shivered ; but Sir Ralph had so far the advantage that he threw his antagonist upon his crupper, and well nigh unhorsed him. Righting themselves immediately, they applied to the maces at their saddle-bows, and furiously closed. The combat consequently assumed that sort of character which admits of duration. An uncontrollable impatience seized the martial beholders. Who was he whose blood did not then leap in riotous gushes through his veins ? The English unconsciously passed the limits of the barrier, and the Scots, under the same impulse, made encroachment on the vacant ground. Thus the body of knights on both sides approximated. Menace and defiance were exchanged between individuals ; lances were couched in sundry quarters, and it soon became evident that the game was not to be left in the hands of two players.

Of Hotspur it may truly be said, that "a thousand hearts were swelling in his bosom." Unwilling to match himself against inferior prowess, or perhaps not thinking it becoming his command to commit his lance on the first vulgar occasion, he had originally bridled his natural impetuosity; but the curb quickly proved vain. When he saw his brother engaged hand to hand, and several others, who had reputation to win, already launching in career, he threw over head the reins of restraint.

"Farneley! advance my banner!" cried he, making his destrier bound forward, "here's at their best. Ho! Scots! stand to it as ye list. Esperance for Percy!"

"*Jamais arrière!*—A Douglas!" rang immediate response from the hostile ranks.

"The portent of the answering slogan was no less intelligible than its sound was familiar. The "doughty Douglas" welcomed the challenge of his foe.

Swift, then, did these two renowned mar-

tialists let loose their direful energies. Thundering across the space which erst divided them, they closed midway, with so true an attaint, that the chargers of both were thrown on their haunches. At the same time, neither rider lost the firm hold of his saddle.

“Well shocked, by my knighthood!” exclaimed Percy, as much pleased with a well-contested course as some might be with a successful one. “We part not so though, Douglas.”

“No—as I’ve a soul for Heaven, and a name for earth! we do not,” obstested Douglas, who, having restored his barb, drew forth a long two-handed sword—“I did not ride in England to try a bout of courtesy with Percy. Sith we *have* met, we must score starker conclusions.”

“Thy words stay their fellows in my throat,” rejoined Hotspur, baring a “brown brand” of similar construction. “Thy ride in England bespeaks a rating, but our swords shall be the wranglers. Have at thee!”

Without further colloquy they forced their

foaming steeds, rearing and plunging, upon one another: playing their glancing blades round their heads; and, as the rapid blows fell and were parried, the living fire flew off in sparks. A struggle so vigorous and so vengeful could not long have continued, without ending in fatal catastrophe, but that the surge and press of the fight around gave it interruption.

On all sides, knights and squires spurred, struck, and jostled together, in bitter strife. Contests, at first personal, had every where become wild and intermingled. In the outset, only the limited chivalry of the armies was engaged; but a contagious sympathy quickly spread, and the ordinary men-at-arms, swarming up from the Scottish encampment, and issuing from the town, the skirmish assumed an aspect as imposing, as it had from the beginning been spirited.

The townspeople on the walls made the welkin ring with their acclamations, which took ever and anon, a shriller or a deeper tone, as success,

or otherwise, befel their friends. Like the citizens who witnessed the duel betwixt the sons of Creon, they perspired with greater anxiety than the combatants themselves. Their elevated situation gave them also an opportunity of judging better of the state of the field than those engaged, and that they eventually saw presenting odds against their countrymen. The latter were in truth sore bested; for the aid they drew from the gate behind bearing no proportion to the numerous reinforcements the enemy received, there was a natural apprehension for the result. Fretfully the borough archery handled their bows, but could only look on deplorably, without daring to send their shafts amidst the closely-mingled groups below.

Instinctively, the English on the plain, feeling their situation, began to concentrate on a point, and fight their way back towards the mouth of the barriers. Manfully did they lay about them to effect this, and, as regarded most, successfully. Hotspur, despising the warning advertisement

echoed from the walls, refused to the last moment to acknowledge the necessity of what looked to him like retreat.

Separated in the confusion from his special rival, he exerted a prowess as singular in its hardihood as it was marked in effect. Wherever he moved he seemed the great planet of a system, keeping a crowd of the lesser revolving in a circle round himself. The law of centripetal and centrifugal force was fully exemplified within the range of his sweeping steel. Even when by dint of tremendous efforts he did ultimately carve his way to the opening of the barrier, and could have commanded the asylum there offered, he disdained to take vantage of it, but continued outside, breasting the torrent that converged on that particular spot.

“Du Guesclin, were he here, would call this madness, Harry,” cried Ralph Percy, after himself and the bulk of his compatriots had re-entered, and Hotspur still remained exposed. “In; in, I beseech thee! Let us not make

wanton gift of our honours. We owe these Scottish vaunters no such boon, I trow."

"Not whilst one English lance lingers in peril," was the decisive reply.

To this, return being made that all had been brought off, the dauntless Warden slowly and peevishly repassed the bounds.

The strife did not, however, cease; for the Scots, flushed with success, and presuming on their numbers, environed the barrier, though they could not force it; the wooden fence serving indeed as a check to advance, but no way interrupting the retort of thrust and stroke 'twixt assailants and defenders.

But an oversight had taken place of singular consideration. It was presently discovered that the esquire Farneley, our gallant banner-man, less fortunate than others, was yet detained amongst the enemy. The silken pennon still seen fluttering above the press, proclaimed him unsubdued, which, he bearing such a prize, was a plain voucher for prodigious exertion. A

sudden eddy of the iron-tide throwing him more into view, shewed also that the mighty Douglas himself was his hardest besetter.

When the sight broke upon Hotspur, his very heart turned in his bosom.

“By the great God that made me!” he exclaimed, almost choking with frenzy, “yonder is my banner—the pennon of the Percy! forgotten and in jeopardy. See!—see! how the brave boy strikes for it! Out, knights—out, bold marchmen! Were we ten to a thousand, I’ll not be bayed.”

To be aware, to speak, and to act, were nearly one demonstration.

“Place! place! ye laggards!” he shouted, spurring his horse against two tall men-at-arms, who occupied the barrier entrance, without seeming inclined to activity. “Cravens as ye are! if your own hearts faint, make way for others more resolved.”

Far from obeying, these fellows on the instant assumed a carriage and position equally unex-

pected and unequivocal. Wheeling round upon the deceived English, they struck down one or two of the nearest, and directly opposed the fiery Warden's egress.

"Forward, Scots!" vociferated one of them, gesticulating violently to the enemy as he snatched occasion: "The way into the town is open! To the rescue! A Moray! A Moray!"

The slogan was instantaneously recognised, and its motive understood by the summoned leaguerers, who made a furious rush upon the debouchure. So desperate was the attack, so unexpected its nature, and so well played the part of the late-avowed abettors, that many gained actual admission into the enclosure: most, however, had reason to deplore their audacity. After a deadly struggle, the survivors were driven out, and the bars of the passage thrown down

But what happened in the mean time?—why that which was inevitable. Let the result explain. Farneley was down, and Percy's banner

in the hands of his exulting rival. Douglas had achieved one of those trophy triumphs which seem to have been crowning objects to the romantic and unsubstantial ambition of the period. The stainless crescents were visible above the head of the captor, but their late gallant defender trampled in the dust.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thou shalt never carry my spear, said the angry king of Morven.

OSSIAN'S FINGAL.

WHEN conviction of the fact last recorded came to the mind of Hotspur, his chagrin was indescribably intense. To one of his ardent and feverish thirst for fame, the occurrence may well be supposed to have been intolerable. Strictly speaking, under the uncontrollable current of events, he had lost no particle of honour; but that was the conclusion of reasoning, and reason had nothing to do with his sensations. A boast—a semblance of vantage, had been given to the

very man of all others in whom he could least endure it : to him who had insolently declared that the leading object of his expedition was to inflict a mortification on the Percy. Gall and wormwood were nectar and ambrosia compared with the bitterness of the thought. Main force alone enabled his friends to prevent his precipitating himself headlong amongst the foe : a proceeding wherein they were inclined enough to second him, had it not now been a thing out of the question with sane men. It was even an act of unusual hardihood still to continue beyond the port ; for the whole Scottish host were advancing to action, and the bowmen on both sides had begun the flight of arrows.

Signs of a disposition to make a formal assault upon the walls, were next manifested by the invaders. The body of their infantry deployed upon the face of these defences, and took threatening measures. Hurdles and straw were in several places thrown into the ditch, and subsequently, divers attempts at escalade projected.

All were repulsed. For a time, whilst these attempts were made, Douglas and his compeers withdrew beyond reach of the English missiles, to which, once again ranked in a separate body, they became an inviting mark. To have remained such, would have been a piece of fruitless audacity, for besides that the best cavalry cannot charge through stone and mortar, a ‘cloth yard shaft,’ yeomanly delivered, was not a thing to be trifled with.

At length, seeing that the efforts of his troops were unavailing, the Scottish leader thought proper to recall them from the assault. Previous however to commencing the decided retreat now contemplated, he could not resist the temptation of bearding Percy with the frown Fortune had in her caprice cast upon his arms. With that purpose, setting awhile at defiance the attendant danger, he galloped up in front of the English chivalry still stationed at the barriers:—of course, not unaccompanied.

“Behold!” he shouted, waving exultingly

the captured banner, and pointing at the same time significantly to his own—"the Pale Lion does homage the Bloody Heart! He shall follow its track, and ever fawningly!"

"He *will* follow—but to devour it," cried Percy, foaming with indignant fury.

"Let him essay; he shall be throttled!" retorted the other. "Percy, when next you see this ensign, it will be flying above the keep of Dalkeith. There it shall hold thee flouting invitation. Prithee, come and seek it."

"Should it ever wave there, doubt not it will bring visiters—but not to thee. *Thine* eyes shall never hail the sight. No!—May my arm wither to the shoulder! if thou do'st live to bear it from Northumberland!"

"'Tis even now upon the way," said Douglas, with insulting coolness, "and methinks, neither I nor roan Liddesdale here (patting his horse) look like to founder on a day's travel."

"Bide me, Douglas," almost entreated Hotspur. "Bide me, as thou art willing to be

deemed a leal knight, and a man of thy deeds!"

"I may not keep camp here to suit thy leisure, Percy. We have performed our lay, and now wend homeward. Our dames expect us. Natheless, we'll not hurry, and may stay a bout with thee, upon convenient ground."

"Wilt leave thy knightly pledge for't?"

"My name and apt inclining are warranty sufficient. Harkee! where'er I pitch my rest, this (displaying the trophy) stands before my tent to court thy touch."

"It is thyself, Scot," said Sir Harry, emphatically, "not the silken toy, I long to grapple with. *That* is but my gage; albeit, a sure one."

"Fear not my being near enough," replied Douglas, putting his steed in motion to retire; a disposition somewhat quickened by the tingling graze of an arrow upon his bacinet. "Ha! shot with a right good will!" he exclaimed. "Thy neighbourhood is none of the best, feere Percy. Adieu! I'll not forget thee, carrying

with me a constant remembrance. About, friends !”

The hostile group, obedient to the signal, wheeled rearward, first giving a cheer of defiance to those they left behind ; which cheer was loudly answered.

“ Halloo, Scot !” cried Hotspur, arresting the ear of Douglas after he had made a few paces, “ *Esperance me conforte !*”

“ *Jamais arrière !*” bellowed back the Scot, swaying half round, and throwing up his hand, “ *Jamais arrière !*”

This delivered, he and his lances cantered fairly off, and the example was obeyed by loitering parties in every quarter of the field.

Derisive shouts from the town attended the retrogression of the besiegers, which the meaner order of the latter ever and anon halted to return ; as if, like railing “ gossips drunk with market ale,” they conceived it disgraceful to concede even the last roar to the adversary.

After the departure of Douglas, Hotspur con-

tinued for some time gloomily silent. The closed bars of his visor concealed his varying colour, but not the lurid glare of his bloodshot eye; whilst a mechanical striking of his mailed hand upon his steel cuissarts, bespoke still further the volcanic throes that heaved his breast.

“Is this to be, sirs?” he ultimately broke forth, in that deep, subdued voice, which often expresses strong feeling better than louder speech. “Is this to be? I say,” he iterated, rising in tone. “If so, let us at once hamstring our destriers and break our lances: better skulk afoot than ride a scoff—better snap ash than trail it.”

“Nay there!” dissented De Neville; “Meseems we have not trailed our points to-day, either. What though the Percy may plain—”

“Plain! quotha?” interrupted Hotspur, sharply.

“Chafe—rage—what you will,” corrected Sir Rafe, “the term skills not much. My thought is, that the mischance of a single

knight's pennon doth not touch the general honour. The chivalry of the March hath, according to the stretch of power and reason, done its devoir right nobly ; that I will maintain, and even yon saucy pelferers will not gainsay. Slight ! they liked not our gift of entertainment."

" Some of them have approved it in gentler sort, at Raby," sneered Sir Ralph Percy, warming at the taint of sarcasm he smacked in the other's observation, or rather, in the impulse which gave it birth. " What faitour was it, that ambushed amongst ourselves, had well-nigh worked a pathway to foul mischief ? If he had honest claim to his battle-cry, he should be the brother of Dunbar, and less a stranger than 'twere well he had been."

" Ay, in sooth !"—" There were a brace of them, and both within the bars !"—" One in a dingy habergeon bore St. George's cross !"—" A clear trick of treason !" These, and several other such remarks, from sundry voices,

chorussed Sir Ralph ere he had well finished speaking.

“It was the Moray,” said Neville, in the decisive manner of a man who would shew how impassive he is to an innuendo he nevertheless perceives; “I recognised his voice and seeming. May a short shrift wait on him for an unknightly practiser!”

“’Twould have been most desirable he had ne’er been allowed ken and scope to plan such practice,” said Sir Ralph, looking reprovingly at De Neville.

“Sir Ralph Percy just now spoke somewhat of Raby,” said Neville, whose resentful spirit spurned alike disguise and control:—
“If his words had a meaning, I demand to know it?”

“Recall to memory my expression, and you have it,” returned Sir Ralph. “I simply averred a fact.”

“But would, mayhap, infer—”

“Impolicy and imprudence somewhere, but

nought touching thy carriage as a liege gentleman."

Neville perfectly understood the allusion, thus qualified, to be intended merely as a damping reproof, void of any real charge, but he was not therefore the less offended.

"And granting thy fact, sir knight," said he, scornfully, "wherefore, may I ask, do'st thou presume to sit in censure on the prudence or the pleasure of a noble household? I will take leave to tell thee, sir, it is a liberty as unwarrantable as misdirected."

"Cousin of Neville refrain," said Sir Ralph: "I may not be bearded, and a quarrel would ill become our kindred."

"Enough of this," interposed Hotspur, "our cousin is a noble gentleman; no one can hint the contrary; though for the mischance, as he calls it, pertaining to me alone, he errs. I must remind him, that thereby is lost a token, which our youthful chivalry were bound to have associated with their fame for gallantry in

its double sense—one which many thought he of all others, would not have seen profaned.”

“ They did me justice, and shall so confess, when they see my efforts for its recovery,” replied Neville, warmly; “ but, alas! I saw it already profaned, when committed to the keeping of a base-born hind. We could expect nought better than has fallen out.”

“ Now, by my life gaged against the boast of Douglas, I will not have that said!” cried Hotspur, with unction. “ Never did I see lance, of whatsoever degree, bear himself in wightlier fashion than this day did Farneley. Had I time to grieve, his fate would touch me nearly. Douglas, for that I am also in thy debt!”

“ Had he survived this business he might have fallen by as noble a hand,” murmured Neville, scarce meaning to be heard. He however was heard.

“ Say’st thou—went matters so far?” said Hotspur, with a shrug, “ congratulate thyself,

then, coz—thank Fortune for sparing thee a rough trial. By my spurs! the odds are, that the purer blood would have been spilt.”

“Pshaw!” interjected Neville, affecting unmeasured contempt for the supposition.

“And then even if crowned with victory to win cool thanks,” observed Sir Ralph, maliciously, “that were poor encouragement to risk such an encounter.”

“I understand thee not,” returned Neville.

“No?” queried Sir Ralph, arching his brows. “Peradventure two lines of an old ditty may help thy dulness.—How run they?—oh! thus—

“The knight paced wearily 'neath the tower,
The squire won kisses in the bower.”

Neville bit his lips and turned aside in disgust.

The brisk passage of this short colloquy, together with what effect the allusion to Moray's attempt created in his own mind, as well as in the minds of those near, had momen-

tarily dammed the torrent of Hotspur's mental lava; it quickly overflowed again.

"As I'm the son of my father!" he exclaimed, "we are all bewitched, and myself the most!—listening to the tag of a ballad when we should be marshalling hands of every weapon to pursue the foe. Mass! if we tarry longer, we will have the town gammers with their house-brooms sallying forth, either to drive us onward or supply our place. Bustle, knights! collect your spears, and let's be doing! The English Marchmen have e'er been held for warriors; it must not lie with our time to change the course of story."

"Truly hast thou spoken of our fathers, and not untruly of their sons," said the prudent Sir Thomas de Grey; loosing the clasps of his helmet to take relief and air, after exertions which told somewhat severely upon a heavy frame; "but recollect, the frontier line is but imaginary, and those of the other border have

been too oft our playfellows not to possess the tricks of the old pastime. At the wassail board, a flight of high words does not amiss ; it fills the souls of the younglings with emulative daring, and screws up the energies to leaps which admit of short-coming in the trial ; but the warrior, and above all a leader, in actual field, has to do with stubborn realities, not to be overcome by a breath, or the best of will. A lance, Sir Harry, is but a lance, though wielded by a Roland. Our power is, as erst, defective. To rush out on yonder practised and compact embattlement, composed of men-at-arms we cannot affect seriously to despise, would be—not to gather laurels, but to give them away.”

“ How so ? will it not be said we dared the more ? ” demanded Hotspur, impatiently. “ If living we fail to gather laurels, some will strew them on our graves.”

“ Alack ! no, my hot young friend,” rejoined the sagacious knight. “ Deeds are judged by their results. The broad tale of our destruction,

should that follow, will be bruited in lands, and endure to times, wherein the explaining causes will be unheard or unremembered. Do the Scots gain a battle, they have the event to boast—*they* may confess it dearly bought, *our* legends may proclaim it gained by chance and vantage, but still the world at large will know only that it *was* gained, and Douglas be recorded the vanquisher of Percy.”

A convulsive heave of Sir Harry’s frame betokened how much the idea shook his spirit.

“Why should we,” pursued the speaker, “to indulge a peevish eagerness, reject needful appliances, and cast ourselves a willing prey to overwhelming arms? Why seek the praise of dauntlessness by a fool’s adventure, which will leave our memories a May game? Still more, why do this when we have glory for our choice? Full sixty miles of heath and heugh lie ’twixt the Scots and home; this day is spent, and the next coming will find them yet far from harbour. They are spoil laden and travel slow: meanwhile,

strength is making to us fast. I can myself gage for a hundred spears ere nightfall from Prudhoe and the south of Tyne. During the even, double that number will pour in from the coastward baronies. Then, the dark hours over, we will put forth; and doubt not but that we may howl St. George upon these ravagers' retreat, in ample season. Come, Sir Harry, confess me justice. Thou art no feather-brained martialist when thy head is cool."

Several other knights added their voices to back De Grey's counsel.

There never lived monarch so despotic, nor captain so imperative, but that the general sentiment of those about him had power to influence, when unequivocally expressed. It is a mode of the effect produced on the great world by what we have learned to call public opinion. As there is no rowing against a mountain-stream, so there is no contending with common feeling, when we are brought similarly in contact with it. The control Sir Henry Percy possessed over

the warlike gentry with whom he was associated was not absolute ; but even if it had been, he must have yielded to the unanimous approbation elicited by De Grey's harangue. Moreover, the knight did him no more than justice in ascribing to him a knowledge of war beyond that pertaining to a merely sinewy combatant. Indeed, had this not been true, he could never have almost superseded in command the stout Earl, his sire.

“Thy reasons are cogent, Sir Thomas,” he observed, after listening with unpleased conviction to the other's arguments : “I may not deny it. But, oh ! my friend, and ye all, sirs, strain not caution too far. If we *are* to sleep on't, let me make one condition with ye—one I claim in St. George's name ! It is, that, enforced or weakened, come cross—come aid, to-morrow's earliest blink shall see us in pursuit : that after sacrificing thus much to what I admit our country requires of us as leaders, we then abandon all other care, to the vindication of our

knighthood, and achieve that all at hazards. Are ye content?" A clamour of ardent asseverations satisfied the demand.

"Brave Percy!" said Sir Thomas, when he could again command a hearing, "believe me I have sought to restrain the ever-valorous temper which, in heat of blood, and roused by galling retrospect, might urge proceedings that would stamp us madmen; but not to bridle well-directed courage. Nay, when I see better may not be, I will uncurb and even spur the former. By mine honour! did I surmise by this delay to lose a farewell bout with yonder louns, I'd be as redly hot for instant chase as ever thou art! When run of sand puts that at stake, and so it will to-morrow, be we not a lance the more, we'll track them, and may he that spares horse, or thinks of life and limb, be blasted by the ban of the whole March!"

"Ha! there breathed the Grey of Wark," approved Hotspur. "Now I may try to think

of lesser matters ; though, by my fay ! 'twill be with a wandering brain. Pass the word, that those who lack repose may seek it ; all bearing in mind stern work postponed. De Felton," he proceeded, calling to him one of his esquires, whilst at the same time a sad shade crossed his brow—"make search amongst the slain without, for the body of your late brave companion Farneley ; to it shall be paid a poor portion of those honours, he had well deserved in life."

"Why, brother," said Sir Ralph Percy, "do'st believe the fell Douglas has inherited King Arthur's charmed sword Caliburn, of which the barest touch was fatal, that thus you presuppose the bold squire's death ? He may be yet surviving."

A mournful shake of the head, intimated Sir Henry's doubt.

"Charmed, or not charmed, Ralph," he replied, "the Douglas' stroke seldom needs twice dealing, and I take shame that he had leisure

for such repetition. Woeful chance!—and yet not so; the best of us may covet a lot so nobly encountered.”

“In hereafter time, good brother,” subjoined Sir Ralph; “and no harm in wishing that time to step tardily. The best of us, I shrewdly fancy, would rather sling his scutcheon to a living shoulder than have it hang in hatchment with an “*Ora pro me*,” beneath. I could have willed the kindly youth a longer career!”

The body of cavaliers now began to pour back into the town, fraught with a consciousness of having there a claim to gratitude and admiration: and, taking fair estimate of the arduous trial to which they had been subjected, and the gallant manner in which they had extricated their battle from the onfall of tremendous odds, the expectation was not unreasonable.

Hotspur alone, and perhaps his brother as partaking of his feelings, laboured under an oppressed spirit.

“Oh ! Ralph,” murmured the elder brother to the younger, as they paced their horses abreast through the long sombre archway of the port, “it seems to me as if I entered this monkish town more like one of the downcast pilgrims that resort to it, than with the assured bearing of a knight and a noble. A banneret without his banner ! and he of the strein of Percy !—damning detraction !”

“Tush ! not so,” returned Ralph, cheeringly ; “you do yourself and name scant justice, to think so deeply on the random spite of a moment—a casualty of the *mêlée*, beyond thy personal governance. Is thy reputation spell-bound in a silken rag, swept out of sight by a chance billow ? As well vest it in thy heron’s plume, and despair when a gust of wind blows that from thy crest.”

“You reason kindly, Ralph, but still know the arbitrary influence of associations cannot be so shaken.”

“Yet adverse truths may outweigh them.

Let thy privation pass for a thing of mark : was it not seen and confessed to be beyond all power of manly hindrance."

"Natheless, as the right wise castellain of Wark truly said but now, though with another view, the story of my misadventure will be noised abroad, where such qualifying commentaries may never reach."

"Well then, if thou art determined that thy backward look shall be deemed murky, heed rather the opening sky before. I have a word that should inspire thee, and 'tis familiar too. Esperance ! you *live* !"

"And my blood is sure unchanged," added Sir Harry, brightening. "Ralph, I thank thee."

A pause ensued, and the confusion of the crowded street which they had now entered, prevented any renewal of their conversation.

The good folks of the town were all much elated ; for, however the irritated and glory-sick Warden might individually feel, the retreat of

the Scots was generally regarded in the light of a victory. Most of the townsmen had been spectators of the day's events from the walls, and latterly, had their own part to play therein, which part they were by no means disposed to have thought an immaterial one. These, on their return, filled the streets with their acclamations, and prepared their dames and families to hail clamorously and approvingly, the ingress of the cavaliers, apportioning to themselves a due share in the applause. All the casements were filled, and discarded wimples left free to vulgar gaze the fair round faces of their buxom occupants. Keen was the scrutiny each passing lance underwent, and many were the lauks ! and lack-a-days ! with which the divers marks of "assault and battery," visible on their armour, were greeted. From several of the conventual houses, processions of monks were seen issuing, already on the way to join in a mass, at the great church of St. Nicholas, for the deliverance of the town. These swelled and diver-

sified the throng in the streets, and divided with the returning military the gaze and attendance of the populace.

During a temporary stoppage, occasioned by a crossing train of the above character, a thought occurred to Hotspur, which caused him to search the troop of cavaliers with an inquiring eye, without its appearing to fall on the desired object.

“Surely I am, in sooth, not myself to-day!” he exclaimed, “else would I never have forgotten thus long to ask for the venerable knight of Coupland, whom now I miss. Yon was an awkward scramble for a hot head and a hoary, to be near. Who can speak of him?”

No definite answer could be obtained. No one however recollected seeing him in the *mêlée*; and the common opinion ran, that he had previous thereto taken the counsel urged on him, and withdrawn.

“I trust it may be so,” observed Sir Henry, in reply to an averment of the last kind. “Hea-

ven forfend harm should have come to him! or, rather, that he may not have careered on it. If so, the house of Coupland has a double plaint against us for this day's coil. Will any one look further to the matter?"

"The care be mine!" said De Neville, preparing to pull his horse about. "And, hark! Sir Harry! I will also take on myself another. One moiety of that same plaint I will be bound to stay, ere it be two days old: I mean that touching the Lady Amise's memorial. For, though I disclaim partaking in the stain of the bereavement, as not assenting to thy past choice of trust, *now*, in altered circumstances, my thoughts are changed. Thou, who know'st my love for the donor, wilt hold it no light pledge, when I swear never to approach her in suit, unless graced by possession of her gift, reft from the Scot. If, from this hour, I faint in will or slack in effort, to recover yon bright tress, defiled in other hands, may I be deemed the scum of knighthood—recreant to lady-love and honour!"

“ That thou wilt do thy devoir in essay, I firmly believe, cousin,” said Percy; “ but reconsider, ere thou do’st task thyself to privation for the issue. Thou may’st be forestalled, to say the least on’t.”

An intimation of resolves kindred to that of Neville was iterated by Delaval, Fitzhugh, and most of the martial audience whose chins were unadorned; which added strength to the contingency adverted to by the speaker.

Sir Rafe, who, though unquestionably a bold youth, had a good deal of the gascon in his character, gave a twitch to his features, intimating that he could trust to himself notwithstanding. Indeed, Hotspur’s cautionary hint and the emulation he witnessed rather operated as stimulants than otherwise; provoking his pride, not awakening his forecast.

“ I have spoken on resolution, Sir Harry,” said he, “ and, by our Lady of Jesumont!—to whom I will make it a vow ere night, the chevi-

saunce shall be performed, or I endure the pains of failure."

" 'Twill be a rash vow, Neville!" whispered Redmayne; himself a man not much disposed to err on the side of rashness. " See'st not you match yourself 'gainst Percy, as well as Douglas?"

" And wherefore not with either?" demanded Sir Rafe, haughtily.

" Nay, but I spoke of shocking both," replied Redmayne, carelessly; " for, as sure as the one will manfully defend his trophy, so sure will the other spurn competition to regain it."

" Then I can await to deal with the victor!" rejoined Neville, confidently: " there are lists as well as battle-fields."

Something like a smile crossed the gloom of Hotspur's countenance, as he accidentally caught the purport of Sir Rafe's vaunting declaration.

“ I shall be right glad to see thee put forth thy might, coz !” said he ; “ but be avised, man ! and if thou dost find a kinsman beforehand with thee—I know one in the mind ;—why, only speak him fair, and he may prove no dog in the manger.”

Here Neville moved off, and the cavalcade resumed its progress.

CHAPTER XV.

Danger and death a stern delight inspire,
And the bold veteran glows with wonted fire.

ROGERS.

AMONGST the many persons who had this day wended to the walls to display gratuitous valour or to perform positive duties, there mustered one who was not drawn thither by either of these motives; namely, Friar Spalding. Curiosity, and a love of strong excitement, even though administered through a medium for which he had little toleration, were his sole incentives. Not that Noel was devoid of his share in the universal feeling that impels

the most philosophic mind to dwell with a sort of complacent pride on the prowess of fellow-countrymen and the warlike power of fatherland ; but that, in addition to the fact that as a priest, he had no part in the scenes he sought to witness, a sovereign contempt for what may be called the vanities of war reduced the sentiment in him to its minimum.

Ascending into a guerite, or watch-tower, of which there were many, communicating in a chain with the larger or bastion towers, he took a stand eligible for viewing the proceedings at the barrier. Some time he leaned over the battlement, in the quiet indulgence of those reflections which the occasion naturally suggested to a mood like his ; but, eventually, the signs of impending action caused them to fade before the interest thereby created. Just at that juncture he was disturbed by a groan rather than a sigh, proceeding from some person behind him.

“ ’Tis hard, body o’ man ! tis hard ! ” mur-

mured the individual there posted ; in whom he immediately recognised Sir John de Coupland.

“ Out, alas ! that I should cry fy on old age.”

The “ time-honoured ” banneret who uttered this lamentation, probably much shaken by the stress of mind and heavy travel he had lately gone through, feeling convinced by rigid joints and aching loins of his total inability to bear armour far less to stand the brunt of battle, had in truth retired from the arena, as considerably recommended. Dismounting, however, at the gate, and leaving his steed and the most cumbersome portion of his equipment with Mouboucher, he instantly betook himself to his present station, whence he intended to scrutinize the deeds he could no longer enact. There he stood, regarding the preparations on the plain with as much regret as an impoverished epicure would be likely to scan the delicacies of a banquet of which he is only able to obtain a sight.

On perceiving Spalding, he directly accosted

him, forgetting in his present state of depression any distaste that his former squabbles with him might have engendered.

“Ha! sir friar,” said he, “we’re well met. Thou, and such as thee, are the company I must now keep. Prithee, get me a gown and scapulary, and induct me into thine order at once. Beads and breviaries are the gear for me, henceforward. Old John of Coupland will die with a shaven crown, instead of a bloody one!”

“Happy will it be for thee that such should be the case,” returned Noel. “Not in regard to the inane shewing; but with reference to the temper it should betoken. The gear you name better befits and honours than coverings of steel: the one bespeaks brotherhood with all our race, the other wrath to many and fear of most. The noblest as well as truest art of *defence*, and the only one worthy the study of rational not to say Christian men, is that of avoiding *offence*.”

This was caviare to Sir John, and he met it accordingly.

“Ay, ay,” said he, “school me in the jargon of thy craft; ’tis the language I must hereafter hold, and ’twere well I should learn the trick on’t early. Out on it! that I should be doomed to mumble with a cowled head when manly work is doing. Then to brook, ‘have a care,’ and ‘take thou heed’ from striplings, squalling, but the other day! to be thrust apart—fended, as it were, in a corner, like Gaffer Crazybones at a cottage royster-game!—Heigho! ’tis bitter bidding.”

“Nay, moan it not, sir knight,” reasoned Spalding, “’tis but the common lot of all who rest their stake in life on brute capacity. Which of yon prancing gallants will not one day repeat thy tale?”

“By’r Lady! I wot not whether the best o’ them may, with a safe conscience, have the power,” said Sir John, ‘wresting the matter to indulge a proud recollection.

“The outspun termination will at any rate be the same,” returned the friar. “Thou and they are alike governed by animal impulses and ambition corporeal. Alack ! for ye all—*sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectus.*”

As Noel threw a clerkly veil over the words of the Psalmist, the uncomplimentary comparison was lost on his auditor.

Meantime, Sir Ralph Percy and Monteith having started on their course as before described, both De Coupland and Spalding found sufficient occupation in watching it to an issue. When the emulous and impatient demonstrations which so shortly succeeded, clearly indicated the wild work about to commence on a more comprehensive scale, the transports of the banneret became unbounded. They were of a very mingled nature.

“Lo ! there now, sir friar,” he exclaimed, “not a pair, but a score of lances couched ! Zounds ! one would think the ground under hoof was burning peat, for every horse doth swerve

and champ upon the bit. Oh! that I backed one of the wildest!—Hark, the escries! Percy and the Douglas are going to it, as I am a Marchman! now—now, they tear away. Glorious attaint! Spears splinter as struck 'gainst towers. Nay then, no bounds kept—all striking in! By my manhood! (woe's me! where is it?) we'll have dole of blows. Soh! up fly mace and battle-axe; those are your tools for closing quarters!—Heavens! how they lay about; cling clang—thwick thwack! Stand to it, brave Marchers! fight, bold knights! Oh! the curse of time; why am I here?"

In this strain did the old martialist rave on, marking with sore stretched eyes the varying aspect of the fight: from time to time breaking into bitter wailings at his own incapacity to play a part. Even the friar, contemning such spectacles both as senseless and irreligious—dreadful in themselves, and pernicious in the evil consequences they engendered, felt a greater stir of blood than he cared to acknowledge. So

inherent in our nature, spite of moral canons and sage convictions, is the disposition to pugnacity. Unlike Sir John, however, he experienced no envy of the combatants, for he remembered the words of Ajax,

“Tutius est igitur fictis contendere verbis
Quam pugnare manu ;”

without allowing a grain of validity to the Greek’s intended sarcasm.

“Rare cavaliers, those young Percies !” remarked Sir John, “choice sprigs of the old stock ! I could begrudge my old comrade his sons. Had I one such amid yon press, ’twould be some consolation, for then my blood would be in field for England, though my body were removed.”

“You have a daughter,” observed Noel, with a slight motive to sound his auditor’s mind.

“What of that—can she charge in stirrups ?”

“No—but her husband might.”

“Not under the name of Coupland,” said Sir

John, overlooking for a moment the friar's freedom of allusion.

"That is as it may be," rejoined the latter, having in his thoughts a mode of destroying the objection. "A name may be adopted."

"He who espouses *my* daughter, must already have one he would scorn to relinquish," said the knight, haughtily; "but how came this talk? I do forget myself and thee in holding it."

A brief silence intervened until he again chose to be the speaker. "Look! what a circle that fireflaught boy makes in the stoure," he said, pointing to Hotspur, "his plate-coat will be worse of this day's wear. The Douglas and he have parted, though I dare swear not by choice. Where is the Scot?"

"Yonder, where you see a sithe-like blade cutting the sunbeams into meteors," answered Noel, indicating. "What is it he makes so fiercely towards?—a banner. 'Tis that of Percy, borne

by our friendly squire. *Salus infirmorum!* he sees, and doth not avoid !”

“ If he did, he were unworthy of his charge,” replied De Coupland. “ But how is it?—our English seem strangely overmatched. As I live they are pent in—the Scots are two to one.”

“ They are,” confirmed Spalding, “ and soon the odds will be greater. See you not the spears making in from the main body of the enemy.”

“ Unfair—unfair ! that should not be ; and yet you’re right. Death o’ my vitals ! the work waxes serious ! Our friends must close to barrier ere it be too late. Shout, burghers ! they have more use for hands than eyes, and barely know the danger.”

Roused into a frenzy of interest, the old knight next flew to an inward angle of the tower whence he could command an area behind the walls where a number of men-at-arms were stationed.

“ Ho, there !” he cried, with wild gesture, “ knaves—misbegotten varlets ! are ye deaf,

blind, or losel? The Scots' main battle is upon your lords. Out! out! if ye be hearts o' pith, and lay on for the rescue!"

The warning was promptly acted on, but the aid supplied went not in sufficient force to restore equality in the contest. The English, we have before explained, were on the whole weak in complete lances, such as the exigency required, and at this precise time numbers were employed in guarding other approaches. Nevertheless, success so far followed the efforts made, that the outsallying chivalry re-established itself within the barrier, as described in a former chapter.

"Gallantly brought off," applauded Sir John, when he perceived that desirable object attained. "Our countrymen well deserve the security they have so valiantly regained."

"Alas! *all* are not secure," cried Noel, much moved by a circumstance to which he directed De Coupland's regard. "Mark a deadly strug-

gle there, upon the left. How it must end one cannot doubt. Oh! I close mine eyes, I dare not look upon the worthy youth's extremity."

Sir John proved less sensitive, though equally concerned. His family pride was implicated in the sight.

"A fearful strait, indeed," he murmured, intensely excited. "Ha!" almost screaming "the fell Douglas grasps the banner, and all's over!—Not yet—hold on, young heart; succour is coming. What!—is there none? Spirit of my past days! the chivalry continue packed and make no effort. Out on them! they slight my daughter's claims! Ah! that trenchant stroke! the youth is slain, and foe wins badge and banner."

A groan from Spalding declared his pain at the announcement.

As for Sir John, he ceased not to deplore the event in loud and bitter terms. For, besides that he inherited some portion of rough feeling, he considered the honour of his house to have

brookd a sort of disparagement. Nor did he, in the first burst of spleen, spare the character of his younger friends. He had not perceived the insidious impediment which the reader is aware checked their valour, and therefore, with childish petulance, questioned their title to the very qualities he had a moment before so much admired.

“And has he perished?” asked the friar, scarcely daring to satisfy himself at the expense of a look.

“Too surely. The Douglas has a bone within his brassarts, and the stroke that sent him down was right wilfully delivered.”

“Then generous blood is spilt for a guerdon of oblivion.”

“A promising warrior has fallen, friar,” admitted De Coupland; “but as to blood—um!—nought may be said.”

“He had a generous soul—I know no other test; for were the Douglas bleeding by his side the self-same stream would flow,” said Noel.

“He aspired highly too, if that be any proof. Sir John, he loved thy child.”

“Then he has done his devoir to her,—that I will proclaim,” answered the old knight, quietly; for, amid the press of other thoughts, he did not fully understand the speaker. Perchance too, he deemed such an effect of Amisia’s charms to be natural enough in any case, and in this, as of no sensible consequence.

“His fall will move her more than it does thee.”

“Mayhap—women have tender hearts,” returned the banneret, obtuse from the prejudices of his rank. “It was a kindly lad; I sorrow for him myself more than I care to show. But this is no time to mope. The enemy attacks in earnest—the walls are threatened. Stand to post, burghers!—shoot, bowmen!—the New-castle must not be taken this bout.”

Henceforth, the bustle on the ramparts—the flight of missiles—the raising and knocking down of ladders, banished all other

considerations but those immediate. The venerable knight, albeit unable to render any practical assistance in the urgent business of projectile defence, still kept his stand and animated others by voice and gesture ; careless of the hazard his freely-exposed person underwent. Nor did he fail to play an excelling part in one branch of warfare vigorously maintained betwixt the ins above, and the outs below. This, like the contention of certain other “ins” and “outs,” consisted in a pithy exchange of taunts and revilings. Using a common language, bred in rivalry, and just familiar enough with each other to have food for mutual abuse, the people of the two nations seldom came within speaking distance, but that tongues were employed as well as sharper weapons.

Spalding, though he also continued on the wall, acted more prudently than his companion ; availing himself of what shelter the guerite afforded. He had probably quite as much courage as most men ; but was superior to the weakness of

tasking it for fruitless exhibition. He believed that there existed better claims to estimation than the faculty of seeming a senseless stock. The tonsure, of course, rendered this conduct only becoming; but here, as in other places, we treat of him more as the individual, than as the priest. Thus he would have behaved from characteristic impressions alone.

The assailants, it is known, were beaten off; but not before an almost invited casualty occurred. Sir John de Coupland received a severe contusion from a crossbow bolt.

On the transpiration of this mishap, the friar, no longer chary of his person, hastened to the old knight's assistance, and proceeded to render services for which his habits fortunately qualified him. Like many of his order, he was prepared to undertake the cure of the mortal as well as immortal part of man. He found the injury taken, chiefly serious as aggravated by the advanced age of the sufferer.

It is the invariable custom of all wounded

heroes, or at least of such as are petted by historians, to make their first outward anxieties appear to be for cause and country (with a "British tar," in a melodrame, it would be for "king and country"). Now, whether the edifying examples of noble self-oblivion so frequently recorded owe some little to poetic flourish, or whether the prescient *actors* have been collected enough to provide for posterity when they found no better could come of it, is fair matter for speculation. With reference to Sir John de Coup-land we have to confess an omission. He, being a plain and thick-witted person, or perhaps not supposing his wound fatal, did not take the opportunity of letting off any thing fine in the above way. His earliest observations were rather of a querulous description.

"Our blessed Lady me apoilzie for the saying!" he exclaimed, "but I do believe the hell fiend has this day thrown his club of spite over my head. For fifty years have I swayed pennon in open field, and never but once brooked worse scathe

than a plaster and a posset overnight could better; yet here, when, for the first time in my life, I stood aloof and looked on, I catch a fillip that fits me for the spital. Then to be quoited down, behind a shield of rubbishly stone, like a dastard cullion!—Oh! I'm served a dog's trick!"

"Rather be thankful, Sir John," reproved the friar, "that the blow has been so long delayed. *Beati pacifici!*—they shall avoid such dangers on earth, and be rewarded in heaven."

"Go to, then, father, thy text limps," objected Sir John, "my case doth lame it. Why I had begun my 'prenticeship to peace; but lo! where has been my protection?"

"Thy spirit was in the strife, though not thy body."

"I'faith was it!—the more to my dolour. Gramercy, for thy cares of leech-craft!—if thou hast made present end whereof, let some of those chuff burgesses help me to Master Farneley's. My darling Amise may hear tales and

droop. Methinks I long to meet her greeting more than usual."

"Sweet maiden," murmured Spalding inwardly, "sorrow is indeed about to seek thee, and that not singly."

Claiming the good offices of three or four of the armed burgesses, who drew round, he had the disabled veteran lifted up, and borne towards the residence of the bailiff.

Though the spectacle of hurt soldiers supported to quarters, was at this moment one that might be seen in every street, the moving group did not escape the customary crowd of gapers. These thronged about the more pertinaciously, as well from perceiving that the sufferer was a man of rank, as from being satisfied that their personal assistance was not likely to be pressed into the service. Considering the evasive selfishness wherewith people universally deport themselves in cases of calamity, every one saying what should be done, yet no one doing, it is wonderful that disgraceful

as well as deplorable consequences, do not more frequently ensue. Unsightly as parish officer and workhouse are to the mental eye, we suspect the sensitive may chiefly thank them that the actual sight is less often glaringly shocked.

With a train so swelled, the party attracted the passing attention of Sir Rafe de Neville, whose errand prompting inquiry, he forthwith learnt the truth. Riding up with his esquires, he immediately took upon himself the care of the veteran which old ties commanded, and prospective interests made willing.

“Here, Hilton,” said he, dismounting, and throwing his rein to the esquire named, “lead thou my horse. And, Surtees, speed on to Neville house, and command that a sick couch, with all regards of entertainment, be had in readiness for a respected guest.

He then pressed through the mob, using no ceremony in thrusting aside such as were nearest to him.

“Place, ye louts !” he cried, “why herd ye

here? Think ye 'tis some drunken beldam, bound for the stocks, that ye whoop and run after this fashion? Off with ye! Home, and scour your filthy muzzles. Home, I say, lest I score some of your addlepaters with the back of my steel glove. How is it with thee, Sir John? Alack! this is what we all feared!"

"Badly enough, Sir Rafe," replied the banneret, feebly, "though I know not why my friends should have feared for me, seeing that I took the part their kindness urged upon me."

"Pardie! how then this result?"

"Tell him, sir friar," said Sir John, unequal to the task himself. "Be thou the disour that shall cap the tale of the peeping knight and the bird bolt."

Spalding accordingly gave the required relation; but not without pronouncing his meed of censure on what he denominated the rash folly of his hero.

"Enough, father, spare me thy commentary," said De Neville, staying the other before his

conclusion. "It is not for the like of thee to understand what fills the heart of a gallant gentleman. By all the blood of our house! had the kail-fed bowman shot fatally, I should have blamed me for the voice I lent to pray Sir John from off the plain. There, if stricken, it had at least been by a noble hand."

"Humph! do those so stricken pass away less painfully? or go they hence better recommended to their Maker?" queried Spalding, sarcastically.

Neville did not deign to answer. His pride led him to disdain the speaker, and his rooted prejudices left him incapable of comprehending, or even guessing at, the reasoning which could undervalue the nobleness of chivalry. He besides disliked the friar personally; having no other motive than that remarkable intuition which induces us, though without overt cause, to hate those that hate us. Had this, however, been otherwise, Sir Rafe is not the first man who

has found it convenient to affect contempt for an argument he cannot refute.

“ We are near to Neville house,” he observed, addressing himself to Sir John : “ I could not answer it to my lord father, were I to permit his ancient friend to be conveyed to any other abode. Sir John will give me leave to direct these fellows’ steps thitherward? I take it on me as a point of duty to resist a refusal.”

“ Nay, but my child—my Amise,” murmured the knight, hesitating.

“ Can be called to your side,” anticipated Neville. “ Remember too, ’twere well she received more measured information, than the sudden view of your unlucky plight would startlingly convey.”

“ That is true. Yet the bailiff and his dame are kindly.”

“ The Nevilles do not keep so poor a household, that Sir John de Coupland should dread a

lack of tendance," observed Sir Rafe, somewhat pettishly.

" Ever the same peevish boy !" said Sir John. " My thoughts ran not in that stream. 'Twas a scruple dictated by the behests of courtesy I meant to moot; I owe a debt of hospitality to these Farneleys, and would not willingly repay it with a slight."

" Pshaw ! sir, oxen are not fed on cates, and were such offered, would turn them in the mouth. The only courtesy these traders comprehend, is that substantiated by a purse of marks. Thou canst exhibit that at thine own time."

" You wrong the Farneleys by that appliance," replied Sir John, speaking in the manner of one engaged to oppose a proposition, but inadequate to the effort, as well from a hankering inclination to yield, as from real exhaustion of body. " Howe'er they came by it, I wot not; certes, they *do* enjoy a spirit above the mean consideration thou do'st put upon their class. But do with me as you list, I'm past

disputing: only, let me behold my child as quickly as may be."

"Meseems, worshipful knight," observed Spalding, "that, as events have fallen out, 'twill be e'en best to embrace the young cavalier's proffer. Master Farneley's house, after the fell bereavement it has just experienced, will be no abiding-place for stranger-guests. Meanwhile, if it so please thee, I will hie me to the lady Amisia, and gently advertise her of thy case."

"Do so, sir friar," enjoined De Neville. "Haste without further words. And prithee, if thou *canst* put such curb upon thy nature, spare the gentle maid a passing lesson on the duties of patience and longsuffering."

Spalding, in compliance rather with a silent nod from Sir John than the insolent recommendation of De Neville, departed instantly on his painful mission. The rest of the party proceeded direct to Neville house.

CHAPTER XVI.

—— Doth a mother live to say—my first-born—and my dead.
HEMANS.

WHEN the Franciscan reached the house of the bailiff, he did indeed find its inmates in a state unfit for the exercise of hospitable cares. Rumour had already wafted thither the baleful tidings of Raimond's fall, and plunged all into bitter grief. Master and dame were utterly prostrated by the affliction, and domestics loquacious in their sorrow. The loud regrets of the latter, not affected as a livery of the season, formed a sound voucher for the worth of him

for whose loss they mourned. It has been said of mariners, and may be equally well said of soldiers, that when absent, their friends can never boldly pronounce them amongst the number of existing men: for, as a notorious gambler can neither be safely called rich nor poor, so a warrior in the field may not positively be reckoned dead or alive. Notwithstanding, when the seal of confirmation is presented, it meets the acknowledgment of those who love, scarcely a whit the more easily. The Farneleys had seen their gallant son go forth in the morning to engage in deadly combat, yet the news of a termination so possible, came not softened to their ears. Glory, noble devoir, and the usual gingle of high sounds companioned the tale to try their power of consolation, but failed as they always do when practically tested. And yet in every point which does not touch *us* to the quick, how entirely we are the slaves of sound! Talk of words being at our command—we are at the command of words! Strange, that this should

continue to be, when every winter-blast of experience strips them of their borrowed plumage; and so few past nonage live whose brows have not been thereby cooled.

Using the privilege incidental to his holy calling, Father Noel entered the lesser, or family apartment, without announcement. Here he found a lugubrious group, composed of several matrons, all employed in soothing the hysterical anguish of the woe-stricken mother. Amongst these, Anisia, in a state of mind little less agonized, performed a part more sympathizing than effective. Supported by that maiden pride, which seldom fairly deserts its post, to conceal an affection unauthorized and unsolicited—and impressed with the greater trial to which she was a witness, she stifled her own sensations, or at least confined them to her own breast. There remained also another circumstance, as yet uncommunicated to the reader, which, by dividing her thoughts, contributed in some degree to sober her feelings, whilst it at

the same time afforded a sufficient excuse for what derangement of manner really did appear. Of this anon.

The person for whom the eye of Noel first sought, as for an ally in the task allotted him, was Hester Arnecliffe. To her he intended primarily to communicate the disaster of Sir John, believing that a less closely-drawn connexion, and more steely nerves, would leave her sufficiently collected to sustain the trembling spirits of her friend. She was not to be seen. A little disconcerted in consequence, the friar hesitated a moment how to act. Whilst he pondered, he was perceived by Amisia, who immediately flew towards him, probably seeking that consolation which in moments of trouble the weaker sex seem to find in the presence of the stronger.

The caustic manner assumed by Spalding in general, arose rather from a mind open to recognise, and accustomed to spurn, the vices of his day, than from any naturally harsh or se-

vere disposition. He despised and contemned the haughtiness of the great, insomuch as to be inclined to war with the order collectively and to feel a kind of prejudice against individuals, merely for belonging to it; but in his relations with a maid like Amisia, full of heart and gentle reliance—distinguishing others only in the degree that their personal bearing and converse were more or less agreeable to her, he threw off at once his customary cloak of bristles. Under the circumstances which had lately brought them together, opportunities of communion had occurred, wherein the ghostly and judicious counsels of the friar, shrewdly seasoned to what he knew to be uppermost in her mind, had won him some esteem. When, therefore, she beheld him at this juncture, it was with an impulse to hail his appearance as a staff of guidance.

“ Oh ! welcome, father ! ” she exclaimed, “ if ever the holy balm it is thy duty to administer

was truly needed, it is now. Hasten, hasten thy appliance, I need not point thee where."

"Anon, daughter. But having just now left Sir John—"

"Oh! would he were here!" interrupted Amisia, involuntarily. "And yet why should I wish it? since it will only shorten the road betwixt his peace and unexpected pain."

"Not unexpected, daughter," rejoined Noel, catching the occasion to bring out his purpose; "such pain he feared; for he is not ignorant of what has steeped this house in sorrow. Thence he hath deemed it proper to choose new abode at Neville house. There he at present awaits, and wishes the rendrance of thyself, and of course, the demoiselle Arnecliffe."

"Alas!" ejaculated Amisia, her outward fortitude disappearing at the mention of the last name—"there you touch the ill in store for him. 'Twill find him in his changed abode alike."

"How means my daughter?"

“To this effect: that did humanity permit me to hurry from the side of this afflicted matron, which I think my dear father will not himself desire,—I should repair to him *alone*.”

“In that consult thy pleasure,” returned Spalding, either not perceiving any latent meaning in her speech, or willing to pass it by, to the gradual development of his charge; “but believe me, whatever tender, and I may say proper feeling, may urge to detain you here, there are claims upon you whence I have come, too serious to be set aside.”

“Serious, father!” repeated Amisia, almost sinking, “Mother of Jesus! what have I now to hear? when will this crowding in of troubles end?”

“Compose thyself, sweet child,” soothed the friar, “and let not thy imagination run beyond the evil. When havoc strides abroad, as it has done this day, those who venture forth cannot

be ensured against imperilment. Thy honoured sire—”

“Is slain—or dying of his wounds!” shrieked the overpowered girl, staggering to a seat, into which she swooned. The strain upon her endurance had at length proved too violent.

Her piercing cry roused even Dame Farneley from her stupor, and drew her, together with the other women, to the side of the lovely insensible. Their sedulous efforts soon produced reanimation; which was quickly followed by a passion of tears. The worthy dame, forgetting her own griefs in those of a creature so young and fair, resumed all the active kindness of her nature, and hung over the beauteous weeper with maternal solicitude. Perhaps her anxious interest was increased by a vague fancy that their mutual sufferings were more than analogously akin. She had indeed tolerable grounds for the notion, and the first unconscious murmurs of Amisia, blending curiously

together the words "father"—"Raimond"—and "Hester," might go to strengthen it.

Vainly for some time did the well-meaning priest iterate that there was no cause for this exaggerated distress ; that Sir John, though undeniably hurt, was in no imminent danger ; his representations were long unheard and unheeded. Their tenour, eventually caught, produced a revolution of conduct.

" Hurt !—suffering ! " exclaimed the maiden, starting wildly to foot ; " asking doubtless for his Amise, whilst she wastes irrecoverable time in women's wail. Have with thee instantly, father—lead me to *my* father."

Dame Farneley seeing her determined, threw around her a super-tunic and adjusted her wimple, things which the agitated young lady herself would have neglected, and Spalding took her under his ready escort. Not to expatiate unnecessarily he conducted her forthwith, whither filial duty so imperatively called her.

Neville house, the place to which we are now

carried, was one of those mansions frequently retained by the ancient nobility in the great towns nearest their domains, not as absolute residences, but as resorts of temporary convenience. The powerful baron to whom it belonged, generally alternating with the Percies the Wardenship of the Marches, found special occasion for such a lodging in the Newcastle, and thence it was usually kept with due establishment. In character, it somewhat resembled those old edifices still extant in the purlieus of the Canon-gate of Edinburgh, though not of similar height. The building described three sides of a square ; a high wall, connecting the advanced gables of the wings, supplied a fourth, and formed the front to the street. In the middle of this wall, a wide gateway, passing betwixt two piers of masonry, crowned with the family cognizance (dun bulls), gave entrance to the quadrangle. From this, a flagged path led across to a low and not very ostentatious door, which gave access to the interior.—

The taste, or policy, whichever it might be, that induced our wealthier ancestors to shroud up their city-dwellings from vulgar intrusion after the model above described, is now properly exploded: nevertheless, there are moderns who may be excused clinging to it—unpopular ministers of state for instance.

In order to avoid the charge of dallying with

“Circumstances

Which vulgar authors, in romances,
Do use to spend their time and wits on,
To make impertinent description,”

we forbear to denote the peculiar appeal by which Spalding, at his reaching the mansion, invoked the Limentimen, the Genius of the portal; neither will we depict the guise and person of the functionary whose duty it was to answer such invocation. Nor, spite of bright example, will we detain the reader in a lower hall listening to the *facetiae* of garrulous botelier, or flippant page; but, eschewing details of introduction

introduce him at once to the chamber of Sir John de Coupland.

Extended on a low couch, and wrapped in a loose surquenie, or house-gown, lay the disabled banneret, his features a little wrung with pain, but in other respects not showing marked signs of morbidity. Loss of blood, saving what had been drawn with sanative motive, not being numbered amongst his ailments, his ruddy visage did not appear entirely robbed of its *gules*. He was supported in the arms of his venerable esquire, Mouboucher, whilst he endeavoured to embrace and caress his afflicted daughter. At one side stood the Franciscan, and a space apart, De Neville and Sir Ralph Percy. The level rays of the declining sun shot full across the apartment, and dispelled the gloom that might otherwise have been occasioned by its narrow windows. At the same time (a curious and rather ominous coincidence) while the red beam entering through one of these fell upon the couch of

the wounded De Coupland, that from the other irradiated the figure of a lifeless knight which occupied a portion of the fabled tapestry opposite. The sobbings of Amisia and the broken soothing of Sir John were the only sounds that infringed upon the general silence.

“Nay then cheer thee, Amise,” said the latter. “Why all this coil about the brunt of a split faggot? I’ve brooked a worse from a blundering urchin’s cat-stick. No more on’t—no more on’t. Hester—where is Hester, to shame thee into better heart?”

The old knight looked round inquiringly, and then became conscious of what he had hitherto been too much engrossed to notice—the absence of that demoiselle.

“Where is Hester?—where is my niece?” he demanded.

Amise faltered out something from which it could only be gathered that she was not at hand.

“Now, by’r Lady!” exclaimed Sir John

querulously, "I thought better of my sister's child than to suppose she would have kept from my side at such a time; ay, and from thine, peat, who art like to need her more. There must be cause. Is aught amiss with her?"

His daughter drooped her head upon the arm of the couch.

"You do not answer, Amise?" he pursued.

She made an effort:—"Surely my dearest father counts not so little on his Amise; but that he can endure the temporary absence of her cousin."

"But, wherefore absent?—Heigh!—Why this hesitation?—Still! Sir friar, thou canst speak, I wot. How is it with my niece?"

"Worshipful son," replied Spalding, as much in the dark as himself, "I have not lately seen the demoiselle, and cannot give thee satisfaction."

"Amise," said Sir John gravely, "*thou* art my treasure; my chief tie on earth; but my sister's child was left a sacred charge to me, and

I must not forget her. This paltering can have but one excuse, and that must needs be serious. Young Sir of Neville, and thou noble Percy, give me your leave awhile."

The two cavaliers immediately withdrew.

"Now, wench, open thy fardel," resumed the knight, "there is little in't mayhap after all; but if the contrary, my mind is not less strong than ever was my body, and that has wrestled in stout encounters. Speak, and content me."

Thus urged, Amisia entered by slow degrees upon a recital, which will tell more roundly in our own fashion.

During the whole of the preceding morning, though the house of the bailiff Farneley had been emptied of almost all other occupants, Amisia had enjoyed little intercourse with Hester. The latter chiefly kept alone in bower, whilst the former cultivated the society of their hostess. When they *were* together at times, Hester seemed immersed in one of those fits of taciturnity not

unusual with her. All this excited no remark, because such deportment was usual with her; but it was coupled with another circumstance quite the reverse. This was an extraordinary toleration for the gossip and attendance of Mabel Tyzack; which forward person she had heretofore greatly distanced. Still, Amisia, with the obtuseness common to people whose perceptions lack the finger-post of awakened suspicion, drew no particular inference. In truth (though in her story to Sir John she omitted to mention the fact) her thoughts were so preoccupied with a certain other object, and so taken up was she with the conversation of Dame Farneley, which turned much upon that object, that her cousin might have changed a feature in her face as well as one in her character without her noting the mutation. Thence it was, that not until a full hour after the event, did she suddenly learn that Hester, accompanied by Mabel, had quitted the house. At first she endeavoured to believe that some little affair of purchase, or charity,

might have led them forth ; but the lady's riding attire being missed, more alarming conclusions suggested themselves. Further search and inquiry only confirmed her fear, that no speedy return, if any, was contemplated, and ended in a discovery that decided the doubt.

Upon a table in the chamber jointly occupied by Hester and herself, Amisia perceived a manuscript volume of those legends and ballads which constituted the sole "light reading" of the day, lying open in a manner obviously meant to attract attention. As if the more unequivocally to bespeak it, a ring customarily worn by the fugitive was left upon the vellum. Instinctively applying to the book, she instantly detected express marks upon the page displayed. These referred to a love "dyttie," thereon inscribed, and pointedly to a stanza couched in the following rhyme :

" The tryst me calls, I forth must ryde
Farre into the north countrie.
A baron bold prycks by my side,
My wed lord bownd to be."

Young misses, accustomed to crow-quills and tinted note-paper, will doubtless deem this mode of P. P. C. notification shockingly brief, vague, and unceremonious ; but the ladies of the period of which we write neither possessed those elegant appliances, nor, in general, the simply mechanical art necessary to their use. Amisia, however, guessed correctly enough the application of the lines, and could easily imagine the flurried spirits—the urgent purpose which denied a more formal advertisement.

“ Strange, ungovernable passion,” she reflected, “ that sets aside kin, country, home, and earliest remembrances, for the idol of an hour. And yet can *I* denounce this, who even now feel how possible the sacrifice?—fy ! fy !—selfish wretches are we all ! But no, I wrong myself ; never shall my heart be so controlled by one desire, as to make me forget that I have faithful friends, much less a doting father, claiming my regard. Hester, I could have easier pardoned thee, did I not suspect a cold ambition

mingles with thy love. Love! Surely, yon man of wrath could ne'er inspire maiden with the sentiment I breathe, and still more surely can he not feel it himself. Alas! my sister; I tremble for thy future weal. Hasty, indeed, hast thou been. Our Lady of Heaven forfend thou hast been more!"

The whole household becoming acquainted with what had occurred, additional light was thrown upon the matter. Tyzack, deeming his promise to Raimond no longer proper to be observed, divulged the adventure of the preceding night; accompanying the tale with many denunciations against his unprincipled spouse. In the "lower house" he did not scruple to bestow a passing sneer upon the damosel Arnecliffe; hinting, that a similarity of inclination must have brought the "proud peat" and the "wanton callet" so soon to an understanding.

It also transpired that a person in the garb of an artisan had, through the instrumentality of

Mabel, been admitted to speech of the absent lady ; not long after whose departure her own had followed.

In this posture the affair stood, when the ill-timed and unhappy news from the field of fight extended the distress, and completely paralysed every thought and action.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



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